JOHN ANSCOUGH'S
LETTERS TO HIS MOTHER
1914, 1915, AND 1916

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John Ayscough's Letters to his Mother

JOHN AYSCOUGH'S MOTHER

John Ayscough's Letters to his Mother

DURING 1914, 1915, AND 1916

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

FRANK BICKERSTAFFE-DREW

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P. J. KENEDY & SONS
1919

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To

Jean, Lady Hamilton

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED BY HER KIND PERMISSION

INTRODUCTION

IT has seemed to me possible that there might be a welcome for this volume of letters from my cousin to his mother: partly because of the peculiar sense of personal friendship for John Ayscough continually testified by his readers, by readers who have never met him, and (living far from England) probably never will meet him; and partly because all who are his readers must know by how rare a bond of love and devotion he and his mother were united.

The letters contained in this volume were the last he ever did write to her, and they were written during his absence on Active Service in France and Flanders: two circumstances which I have thought might give them a special interest. For five and twenty years Ayscough's mother had been in every sense dependent upon her son: for many years she had hardly suffered him to leave her, even on the briefest absence: she was eighty-five years old and in most precarious health. His departure for the front was a blow from which she never recovered: the blow which did in fact bring her long life to its end. Knowing well how this almost *must* be, it was her son's one preoccupation to bridge that absence as much as was simply possible by unfailing frequency of letters, and further, by seldom in those letters allowing her to picture him as in danger or discomfort. He wanted, if he could, to make her imagine him as enjoying a complete change, full of interest, and having no drawback but the separation from herself that it involved.

To say this is necessary, or the letters can hardly be understood: they are all bright and cheerful, and succeed

in giving an account of some of the hardships without making them depressing.

John Ayscough's mother was Elizabeth Mona Brougham, daughter of the Rev. Pierce William Drew, for twenty-five years Rector of Youghal, of Heathfield Towers, Co. Cork. She was born on October 3, 1829, and was one of seventeen children (of whom, however, many died young), and was baptized at the parish church of Shandon, the bells of which formed the subject of Father Prout's most famous lyric.

At six years of age, in consequence of a difference of opinion with her governess, she informed that lady that her eyes (which the owner of them esteemed fine) "were like two burnt holes in a blanket." The culprit, haled before her mother, was informed that her conduct rendered her unfit for education at home, and told to prepare for immediate withdrawal to the establishment of a Christian lady at Cork. To the Christian lady, a Mrs. Bailey, the small Mona was accordingly dispatched per coach; and she proved a very sensible person, in whose charge the child was not unhappy. Being so much younger than any other pupil, she got much petting, far more at school than had ever been her lot at home. From Mrs. Bailey's, Mona Drew was later on moved to the "finishing establishment" of a Miss Oakley, for whom all of her pupils seem to have entertained a kind of worship. Once finished, Mona returned home and "came out" under the tutelage of her only elder sister Matilda. Throughout life, Matilda and Mona were devoted to each other, which speaks well for the younger of the two, on whom their mother was always impressing the superiority of Matilda in beauty, character and accomplishments.

It was at this time that John Ayscough's mother had her one and only romance. She was extremely popular and pretty, with rich blue eyes, very dark brown hair, almost black, and all her life had the sweetest expression conceivable.

For one of her many devoted admirers she felt what was undoubtedly the great love of her life. He appears to have been a charming man of excellent character, ample means, and with every qualification for making a fit husband; but although a gentleman he was not sufficiently aristocratic to satisfy her father's ideas, so was dismissed in such a fashion as to lead him to believe that the young lady herself thought him beneath her. She also was deceived, and allowed to imagine that he had no serious intentions. Captain W—— then exchanged into a regiment bound for service in Canada, and swore to his friends that he would never marry unless he heard of the marriage of the girl he loved. It happened that he read of it in a newspaper, while staying in a hotel, and his terrible emotion attracted the attention of a stranger sitting near. Thinking that the officer was taken ill, he offered sympathy and help; they became acquainted and Captain W—— presently explained the cause of his trouble: that the one creature he had ever loved, and who he believed had truly loved him, had cut herself off from him for ever by marriage with another man. The other man was Ayscough's father, the intimate friend and fellow collegian of the clergyman whom Mona's elder sister had married.

It was in 1851 that she married the Rev. Henry Lloyd Bickerstaffe, third son of the Rev. Roger Bickerstaffe, Rector of Boylestone, Co. Derby. Those who have read John Ayscough's *Fernando* will recollect that the marriage was not much approved by the parents on either side, nor was it fortunate; perhaps husband and wife were unsuited: at all events it ultimately came to a complete separation shortly after Ayscough's birth, on February 11, 1858.

Readers of *Gracechurch* and *Fernando* will remember John Ayscough's first recollections of North Wales, his mother having moved to Llangollen about a year after his birth. Mrs. Bickerstaffe, besides having the care

and educating of her three boys, used to write stories and novels. Owing to her many other industries, which took up the greater part of the day, the only time for writing was at night. The stories would now be called short stories, but they were much longer than the average short story of to-day; many of which appeared in *The Queen*. It was during this time Ayscough's mother took a departure from the ordinary and wrote a novel of Japanese life called *Araki the Daimio*, which was reckoned very clever.

During her life most of her spare time was devoted to natural history, and she made wonderful collections of ferns, mosses, moths, butterflies, and fossils, also sea and land shells. As you can see, the love of nature was not in Mrs. Bickerstaffe the pastime of an idle woman, because it necessitated a great deal of climbing and very long walks: how it was she managed to find time to do so much, to bring up her children and write novels, I don't know.

Mrs. Bickerstaffe had among her acquaintances the Dr. Arthur Adams who wrote *Travels of a Naturalist in Manchuria and Japan*, which I believe is still read by lovers of natural history.

John Ayscough, who was quite a small boy at this time, went with his mother to stay with Dr. Adams and his wife at Rockferry, opposite Liverpool. One evening Mrs. Adams gave an intellectual evening party, which did not include such frivolities as music and singing, but was "a feast of reason and a flow of soul." The guests not having dined, owing to the early hour of the party, were beginning to feel rather hungry, when about one o'clock in the morning Mrs. Adams provided a *very* light supper, consisting of jellies, biscuits, etc. Little Johnny, who had heard about dinner parties, wanted to know if this was one, so he said to a young naval officer who happened to be standing near him: "Could you tell me what meal this is?" to which he replied, "God only knows, my child."

Mrs. Bickerstaffe, besides being pretty, was very witty and entertaining and full of anecdote. Ayscough, when quite small, was invited to a dinner party with his mother. The life and soul of the party was Mrs. Bickerstaffe, who amused her friends by telling one anecdote after another. Her fellow guests were all amazed and wanted to know how she managed to remember them all, when little Johnny exclaimed rather loudly: "Oh, she doesn't have to remember them for long, because she keeps them in a little book." Of course, everybody went into shrieks of laughter, except his mother, who being deaf, didn't hear: but when it had ceased, she wanted to know what it was all about, and on being told could not help laughing herself. This, I think, will give a little idea of her sweetness and good nature.

Added to her many industries and occupations, Mrs. Bickerstaffe played the piano well in spite of her deafness, and like Lady Bertram in *Mansfield Park* she did embroidery and crochet, which, by the way, she did not start until she had passed her seventieth year, and as in the case of her painting, had no lessons, but taught herself and went on continually improving, till the end, so that some of her finest work was done shortly before her death.

In 1864 or '65 Mrs. Bickerstaffe moved to a small town, near the Welsh border of Shropshire, described in *Gracechurch*. This, as is told in the book, was done in order to place her boys at the locally famous school of the Vicar; who, however, died a week or two before her arrival.

In 1868 Ayscough's father died; in April, 1870, his mother married Charles Brent, one of the eight sons of the Rev. Daniel Brent, D.D., Vicar of Grenden in Northamptonshire, in whose church the wedding was solemnized by himself, assisted by one of his sons.

John Ayscough gives a very interesting portrait of his mother in *Gracechurch* and *Fernando:* "My mother in

her soft lavender silks, looked lovely, and I was as proud and pleased as if it had been arranged by me. God knows she had had sorrow enough, and if an aftermath of gentle prosperity and happiness was now to be reaped by her, she deserved it all; and I, at least, could see nothing but cause for joy in it."

It was in December, 1880, that Ayscough's mother took leave of him at Euston Station, for Liverpool, where she embarked for America, Mr. Brent having bought a ranch in Texas.

A day or two afterwards Ayscough left Cardinal Manning's house, where he had been staying, for St. Thomas's Seminary, Hammersmith, where he made his studies for the priesthood. A few months earlier Mrs. Brent had followed her son into the Catholic Church. She was happy in her new life in Texas; happy, indeed, it was her genius to be everywhere; but the life was much too rough, the work too hard for one of her years, and the food unfit for one who was rapidly becoming an invalid. But her old resources did not fail her; Nature was all around, and for her it was ever full of absorbing interest; she sketched and painted more than ever; and then her sketching made demands not only upon her skill, but upon her courage, for the scenes of her painting had to be sought in the wild and lonely brakes, the homes of panthers, wild cats, and, much worse, of innumerable rattle-snakes: she was always quite alone, and it will be remembered that she was so completely deaf as to be unable to hear the nearest sound without the aid of her speaking trumpet. Her husband, Mr. Brent, would often expostulate upon the danger of those solitary ramblings, but she would laugh and declare, "I am so fat that only a *very* hungry panther would think of eating me, and as I can't hear the rattle-snakes rattle they never frighten me."

After a dozen years it was decided that her only hope of life was to return to England and to rest, and in the

summer of 1892, she joined her son at Plymouth, where he was Military Chaplain, and with the exception of his period of Active Service in France and Flanders, during the Great War, they were never again separated.

John Ayscough has often told me of his horror, almost dismay, at first meeting his mother on her return from Texas. He had been scanning the faces of the passengers in his search for her, and had already more than once glanced earnestly at one very old, broken-down lady, in amazing clothes of at least a dozen years' standing, without in the least recognizing her. Presently she smiled, asked a question, and held out her battered speaking trumpet. In her smile he recognised her: but it was literally a shock to find in this wholly broken, terrified-looking woman of extreme age, his mother, whom he had last seen looking fairly young, certainly not beyond middle age, upright, and with a face bright with cheerful courage. He says that though she lived a quarter of a century longer, she looked many years older at her first return from Texas than at the time of her death, and was more bowed in figure: she was in fact not sixty-three years of age on her return to England and looked very much more than ninety.

If she had been left a few more weeks in Texas, the rough work and hard toil would no doubt have killed her. This journey across the Atlantic she made entirely alone, deaf, in shattered health, and in a very inferior boat — as she sailed from a small port in Texas itself to avoid a long railway journey. With astonishing rapidity she recovered health, spirits, and cheerfulness, in a comfortable home, under the charge of an excellent doctor; with good nursing and attendance and good food, she very soon lost the look of extreme age, and recovered her upright carriage, her happy expression and abundant interest in life. The mother and son remained seven years at Plymouth, till 1899, the reunion seeming an almost incredible joy. With a very large social circle Mrs.

Brent was, as she had everywhere been throughout life, much more than popular. The affection of these kind friends was a peculiar delight to her; and the beauty of the country round Plymouth afforded endless scope for her talent in water-colour drawing.

In March, 1899, John Ayscough was ordered to Malta, and she accompanied him. The voyage she thoroughly enjoyed, and very soon she had as many friends in Malta as she had left behind at Plymouth.

During the six years of her stay there (without a visit to England) Mrs. Brent never seems to have had any sense of exile, and was certainly never bored. Here, too, there was plenty of scope for her many talents. With her son, she explored every corner of the island, sketching, collecting flowers and studying the archæology of the place.

During the six years in Malta, John Ayscough and his mother made many visits to Italy and Sicily — visits which have fruit in *Marotz*, *San Celestino*, and *A Roman Tragedy*. Also they visited France, Switzerland, and North Africa — the fruit of which journeys is *Mezzogiorno*, *Admonition*, and several of the stories in *Outsiders and In*.

Travelling was an immense joy to her and especially was she delighted by a trip to Crete. One of the many wonderful things she did during her life was devoting her seventieth birthday to an ascent of Vesuvius.

During this six years in Malta, Mrs. Brent was presented for the second time in private audience to Pope Leo XIII, and in 1904, for the first time, to Pius X.

At last, in March, 1905, they returned to England, and Salisbury Plain became their home.

After less than four years at home, John Ayscough was ordered on a further tour of Foreign Service, to last probably for five years, and she determined to go with him. At her great age, how could she expect ever to see England again? Early in March, 1909, they sailed from

the Port of London for Malta, for it was to Malta they were to return.

It was a bitterly cold day, with deep snow everywhere, and heavy snow falling, but she trudged on bravely, her son expecting any minute to see her fall and there breathe her last. It was at least half a mile to walk from the train to the docks, and not a conveyance of any sort could be had. A very devoted friend of his came and brought a beautiful bouquet of roses, which seemed to give her fresh strength to continue that miserable walk. After being less than a quarter of an hour on board, she was talking and joking about herself to complete strangers as though she found life full of amusement.

They were welcomed in Malta by many old friends, though many were gone. A charming house was soon found, with a pretty garden full of fine flowers, but Mrs. Brent could no longer enjoy things: through the eight months of this second stay, she was too ill for anything but a wistful longing for home. The doctors said it must be home or a prompt end; and her son had to purchase an exchange home and obtain War Office sanction for it.

At the end of October they started for England. The voyage itself did good and by the time they reached London she was out of danger; she was, in fact, destined to live seven years longer, though with frequent more and more alarming illnesses. Within a few weeks of her return, Mrs. Brent received from Pius X the Cross of Leo XIII "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" in gold, an honour which she told her son "made her feel very humble," having, as she considered, done so little to deserve it.

Immediately on the outbreak of war, Ayscough was sent to France with the first British Expeditionary Force, and in December he returned to England, as *he* thought, for good. I need not describe the joy and happiness it gave his mother to see him back again,

perfectly safe and in his old home, but alas! it did not last for long. On the morning of February 8, 1915, he received orders to return to France immediately.

I am sure my readers will realise what a blow it was to them both: the news came in the early morning. He jumped out of bed, told his dear mother, dressed, had breakfast, and was out of the house within an hour and a half of receiving his orders. When he returned in December, he had been told that he would be released from Active Service and continue duty at home. Like her other troubles, his mother took it all bravely, and considering her age and state of health, kept cheerful.

About the beginning of November, 1915, Ayscough became very ill, but continued his work until the doctors discovered how bad he was and insisted on his going into hospital, which he did, but not until the third week of January, 1916. The day after his admission into hospital, he underwent a serious operation, but luckily got through successfully. He was then sent to a hospital in London, where he underwent another operation, but only slight in comparison with the first, and after being there about a fortnight, he returned home. The medical board then offered him a few months' sick leave, but he only accepted a month on condition that if, at the end of that time he was unfit for duty, further leave would be granted; this proved unnecessary and he resumed duty at home in Salisbury Plain. But after this second shock, his mother could never believe that he was home for good; every day, every post, she expected that orders would come and take him away again. The strain at last proved too much for her, and in July she died. Oh! what a terrible loss it was for Ayscough; I don't think there ever was a more deep love and affection between any mother and son than between these; they were everything to each other.

In the last chapter of *French Windows* he says, "For his first remembered impression of life was the realisation

that he was his mother's son, and almost the next his realisation of the terror lest he should lose her. The dread of that loss remained ever afterwards the only real dread of his life: no sorrow, no misfortune, threatened or fallen, seemed to affect the *substance* of happiness so long as that supreme calamity was spared. For fifty-eight years it was spared, and for that immense reprieve he can but cry his thanks to Divine patience.

"That the calamity fell upon his life during the writing of these pages, must make this to him a different sort of book from any that he has written, must make of the whole book a lingering farewell."

Owing to the recent date of the letters and their dealing with living people, it has been necessary to omit much, and unfortunately much that constituted by far the most entertaining portion of them.

Ayscough's first period in France was spent at the front with the fighting troops, while the latter part consisted of garrison and hospital duty at Dieppe and Versailles.

The two periods, I think, make a fascinating contrast and an interesting volume of letters.

FRANK BICKERSTAFFE-DREW

John Ayscough's Letters to his Mother

John Ayscough's Letters To His Mother

I

Railway Station, Salisbury

My own Darling Mother: I send this by the chauffeur to bid you another good-bye, and to thank you *very, very* much for having borne this cruel smack of fortune so well. It makes it so *much* better for me your doing so.

God bless and keep you, dear, and bring me soon back to look after you.

Oh! for Peace.

Dublin
Sunday, 1 *o'clock*

It seems a hundred years since we parted, and this is my first opportunity of writing. I will go back to the beginning and tell you exactly how I have got on.

My dear, my dear, how good and noble it was of you to be so brave and cheerful at our actual parting: it made the pain of leaving you, and of saying good-bye, so much easier to bear. But I do hope that you did not collapse when I was gone.

At Salisbury station there was Mr. Gater come to see me off and, though the train was an hour late starting,

he stayed on: I thought it very nice of him, and he was most cordial, friendly, and sympathetic. I am sure you and Christie may always send to him if you want any male assistance: he did not offer his services as a matter of form — but as if he really meant it. I travelled up very comfortably with Captain George Herbert, brother of Lord Pembroke, and we talked the whole way; he knows scores of people I know, and we had lots to say, besides he is a Territorial and frightfully keen about the army and the war.

It was dull but quite fine when we got to London. I first telegraphed to you, then went straight on to Euston in a taxi. For a quarter of an hour my taxi was going at a foot-pace beside a detachment of Lancers: the young officer called out to me: "Off to the front, sir?" and began talking. He said all his detachment were recruits who had joined the night before; they looked tired, but marched pluckily: they were not going to the front but only to St. Albans, where they are to train for some months to fill up gaps.

In the street I saw Cardinal Gasquet walking with his Secretary. After putting my things in the cloak-room I had tea; went for a walk; came back and had dinner in the Euston Hotel and then secured a good place in the Irish Mail.

I had one entire side of the carriage, and slept lying down comfortably till Holyhead. Then I had some tea and went below; I had a large six-berthed cabin to myself, and was able to undress and make myself very comfortable, and so slept till 6.30; then I got up and washed and dressed, and went ashore (not intending to go up to Dublin till 8.45), when I took a jaunting-car and went off to Monkstown to find Helen and Jack.

I found their house but it was shut, and the creepers much overgrown over the door, so I suppose they have been long away, visiting.

I had breakfast and got off my telegram to you: then we came up to Dublin and I heard Mass (I could not say it, having had tea after midnight on my journey). Then the Church of England chaplain attached to the same ambulance as myself and I took a car over to Phœnix Park, where our ambulance is.

The Commanding Officer was not there, but his Adjutant told us there was no tent for us, and that we could only be allowed thirty-five pounds of baggage — about as much as my roll of rugs alone. However, after about two hours' waiting and discussion, I got the C. O. to agree to my proposal that I should be allowed to take my stuff on to the base, and there discard almost all of it — that will enable me to find some convent where I can leave it, and where it will be more within reach than if I left it behind here.

Also I found an empty tent in another camp joining ours, and they allow me to use it: so that I shall have a place to sleep in to-night and to-morrow night.

I hope you will be sitting in the garden this lovely afternoon. Do keep well, my darling; that is what I am praying all the time; do keep well, and let me think of you as well and cheerful in the beloved home. I love it far, far more than you do: and it is like an anchor to every happy thought to recollect it, and you in it.

God bless you both; bid Christie keep a good heart, and let her know how I thank her in advance for all her care of you.

We are quite in war conditions — no tables, chairs, beds, baths, washing-stands — nothing but the ground and our rugs!

St. Francis Xavier's, Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin

Monday, 10 A.M., *August* 17, 1914

I HAVE fallen among most kind and hospitable, friendly and pleasant people, with whom I am staying. The

letter I wrote you yesterday was written in the parlour of a little fifth-rate hotel just outside Phœnix Park, where I had luncheon. After finishing my letter, I got on a tram and came in to the city, getting off at "Carlyle Bridge" as the Unionists call it, "O'Connell Bridge" as the Nationalists call it. Thence I walked up O'Connell Street (Sackville Street) and presently met two young priests, who saluted and began to talk. (All the priests here are full of friendliness). I told them I wanted, if I could, to get a light altar-stone, instead of the very heavy one I brought from our chapel at the Manor House. They said, "We are Jesuits, from Gardiner Street Church, St. Francis Xavier's . . . go up there and ask for one." Well, I came here, and the Father Minister (Housekeeping Father) instantly said I must stay here. He found the Rector and Father Provincial, and they would not take any refusal; I must be their guest till we embark.

They sent Father Wrafter (the Father Minister) out to the camp in Phœnix Park, to fetch in my baggage in a taxi; that was really just so that I should not be at the cost of bringing it in all that long way myself. And so here I am, very comfortably installed, and made a very great deal of.

After dinner we had great talk and smoking: all the Fathers here (there are about twenty) seem admirers of my books.

The Rector and Provincial are charming men: and to-night the latter is taking me to dine with his brother at Kingstown.

I said Mass this morning at the altar I send you a postcard of. One of the Fathers insisted on giving me all these cards to send to you.

This house is very large and fine: most comfortable. But what I like best in it is the universal spirit of hospitality and kindness of the Jesuits themselves.

I slept uncommonly well, and so did not begin my

camp life with last night, as I had expected. I said Mass early, had an excellent breakfast, and then they showed me the house, church, library, etc. And now I am writing this to you; I hope you are getting on all right; presently I shall go out to post this and will telegraph to ask how you are. I shall be here till about nine o'clock to-night; then go to camp; and to-morrow morning, I believe, we embark.

August 18, 1914

It is 6.30 A.M. on Tuesday, and we march off from this camp, Phœnix Park, in half an hour.

I think it almost impossible that you can hear anything from me for days now. We are, I believe, going to France, and will take some days to get there: and a letter would take some day or two to return. Besides, it is quite possible they would not let us write at first, or even telegraph — they are so determined to hide all the movements of our troops.

I just write this to say good-bye. I don't quite know how I shall get it posted. I dined at Kingstown last night, with the Provincial of the Jesuits and his brother, at a charming hotel on the sea-front. Then we trained into Dublin and came over here in a taxi: I cannot tell you what the hospitality and kindness of those Jesuits have been.

Last night was my first under canvas this time and I was very comfortable.

Do tell the Gaters I have been so incessantly on the rush it was impossible to arrange a meeting with Cyril. Lots of priests have been calling here in camp "to see the great Mr. Ayscough," but none have caught me.

I was so delighted to get your two telegrams and to hear you were all well. Mind you keep well and in good spirits. Best love to dear Christie.

I had a charming letter from Mrs. Drummond. Her

husband has gone to France on the Headquarters Staff of the 2d Army.

Dublin

Tuesday, August 18, 1914

We are safely embarked; and much more comfortable it is than the camp.

We left camp about 7.30 this morning, and the long line of waggons, with the big sections of men marching between, looked very picturesque.

Phœnix Park is extraordinarily beautiful — 1756 acres of it — with the Dublin mountains for background and the exquisite flowers and trees for foreground. The weather is beautiful and absolutely fine, but not too hot.

I have a charger, rather a nice horse, not badly bred, and quite well educated and behaved. But I let my servant ride him from camp to this ship, and sat cocked up on an ambulance waggon; it was quite interesting, and also quite comfortable.

The distance is about seven miles, two of park, and five of city and docks, and all along the way people were gathered in groups to see us go by. The Irish are *enthusiastic* about the war and the Emperor of Germany would have a painful experience if they could handle him according to their desires.

I sat so high, cocked up on my ambulance, that my purple stock attracted instant attention, and drew forth innumerable salutes: "God bless you, Father," "Come back safe, Father," etc., etc. At one corner there was a big group of men and they called out, "Three cheers for the priest" — which were given accordingly.

At another point there were a lot of women waving little Union Jacks — this is "disloyal" Ireland.

General Drummond has gone out with the 2d Army on the Headquarters Staff of it. If you like you might write to her, at Trent Manor, Sherborne, Dorset.

It is now about 11.30, and we shall probably not sail till seven o'clock this evening. I must not tell you where we are going: but it is no further off than Belgium; I seize all these opportunities of writing because soon there *must* come a time when we cannot get letters off.

It is awfully comfortable on board ship after camp. I have a cabin to myself and no one else (out of sixty officers) has. It is very comfortable, and I quite long for bedtime, to go to bed in it! In fact I probably shall not wait till bedtime, but have a sleep after luncheon.

I left my brown valise at the Jesuits, with the things I am sending home. Here is the key of it.

The altar stone should be put back in the chapel on the altar: the papers, etc., in the bureau drawer, where I told you.

No more room. God bless you and cheer you, my dear!

S.S. City of Benares

Thursday, August 20, 1914

We are just entering harbour, and I must get a short letter ready to post whenever I get the chance. They say the best address will be "No. 15 Field Ambulance, c/o the War Office, London, S. W.," and it is a little shorter than c/o Sir Charles McGrigor, etc.

We sailed the night before last, about 7 P.M., and the scene was very touching. There was a crowd of sweethearts and wives on the quay, with other folk, too; the other folk all cheers and shouts, the poor women all tears. Our voyage lasted about forty hours . . . it is just after breakfast, and we are slowing in along the quays; they are covered with people waving handkerchiefs and calling out, "Vive l'Angleterre!" "Hip, hip!" and our men yell out "Vive la France!" and as much of the Marseillaise as they can sing. It seems a fine harbour and a gay, prosperous-looking town. The

streets run right down to the quays, and are not squalid streets like those that melt into the quays at Dublin. Our voyage was charming, the weather exquisite, and the sea a great silver mirror. Yesterday morning we were quite close in to Land's End, which I had never seen before. We ran parallel to the peaceful coast for hours, then drifted south. The channel seemed full of shipping and commerce in spite of the war . . . which shows how effectually our navy protects it — and you.

I had a service for my men yesterday morning and gave them all scapulars. From luncheon till 7 P.M. I was hearing confessions, one hundred and twenty-seven of them; it was splendid. I think every Catholic on board came.

The ship has messed us for five shillings a day, and "done us" very well . . . excellent plain food: and they were only bound to supply hot water! I got your letter, written on Sunday, and the parcel of letters Christie forwarded, just as we sailed from Dublin.

I was so glad and so happy to get such good accounts of you: do keep it up. Be well, cheerful, sanguine; and *I* can be happy. I cannot tell you how many prayers I have offered for you, and how serenely fixed I feel in God's protection of you.

We hear on arriving that the Germans are driven back all along the line, that the French occupy the Vosges valleys and that the Germans have left many wounded, guns, etc. behind them. I must not tell you the name of this place, but perhaps the postmark will tell.

Best love to Christie and the Gaters. I have managed to get ashore: we stay here till to-morrow, when we go on somewhere, twenty-two hours by train; we don't know where.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Friday, August 21, 1914

I AM going to try and write you a little letter or begin one at all events . . . We are in Rest Camp and arrived here last night at dark; nobody knows how long we are to stop: perhaps a day or two; and perhaps we go on to our "base" to-day. The camp is about four miles outside the town.

After I wrote to you yesterday I watched the horses and men disembark. It is rather amusing watching them. . . . They have to run up a sort of chicken-ladder to the main deck, then down another to the horse-deck, and some of them kick up awful trouble over it. I got leave to go into the town, and had some luncheon, then bought a few things — a celluloid collar, a large water-proof sheet, a "Brassard" (arm badge with Geneva Cross, to mark one as a non-combatant), a haversack, valise, etc.

Then I got a warm bath at some swimming baths, and walked about.

There is not much to see. The town is large, prosperous and pretty, but not old, and the churches are nothing much.

About 6.30 I came out here, on my own, with a young gunner officer: and waited for my "unit" to arrive: it looked very picturesque when they did, the light almost gone, the camp-fires quickly blazing up.

I am really the "senior officer" of the "unit" and was the only one to be allotted a tent to myself: but the Church of England chaplain was to be one of three, so I gave him half my tent.

I was delighted to see my baggage again: I hadn't seen it since Monday at Dublin, and was very dirty. Then we had supper — bread and tinned salmon. We are regularly on field-service lines now. No chairs

or stools, tables, etc. It looked rather picturesque, the group of us huddled on the ground, each with his platter and pannikin, no light but a single candle crammed into a bottle-neck.

Almost immediately after supper we went to bed: I lent my new sheet and the bigger of my old ones to the officer in the next tent who had none, but I was quite warm with what I had.

When I began this it was pouring rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, and looked like rain for the whole day: but it soon got fine again. I am writing in my tent, sitting on my bed with the black box that used to be under your bed for a table. It is quite convenient.

Some say we shall be here a week: some that we shall go on to-night to Amiens. I would much rather push on.

I am very happy except for your being left to miss me. God send a speedy end to the War (I am the only officer in the British army that says so, I daresay). It has certainly killed our beloved Pope. I read of his death (that took place in the early morning of yesterday) yesterday afternoon, with pain and sorrow. He was plunged into grief by the prospect of this war, and implored the old Austrian Emperor not to begin it. The war will have no nobler victim. Yesterday in the streets they were selling by way of joke, "The Last Will and Testament of Wilhelm II."

As far as *we* can judge, the war is everywhere going against Germany and Austria; but of course there has been nothing decisive yet.

I find it so hard to realize that I am part of an Expeditionary Force engaged in a huge war; it is all so exactly like manœuvres. But no doubt we shall realize it presently, when we get to our line, and the wounded begin to come in.

It is twenty to eleven in the morning (Friday morning) and you are sitting up working in bed. It seems about

a year since I was at the Manor House, and yet I was there a week ago.

To-day Mary comes home to you. You must excuse these scraps of paper; I was very lucky to find any; and still luckier to have brought a fountain pen with me. There is no pen or ink in camp. The French are uncommonly civil, but not (I think) so *truly* cordial as the Irish, though we are "out" in their quarrel.

Everyone says the German Emperor will commit suicide: the Crown Prince, they say, is wounded, — who knows anything? On each side of the huge armed wall there is ignorance and talk.

I think I must stop. I write plenty of letters, but never feel sure of your getting them. I post them all myself, but some say every letter is opened and held up if not approved.

At least, if you suffer, it shall not be through my neglect. I'm sure you read my letters to Christie, or give them to her to read, so I only send her brief messages. I am truly sorry for her, for I know how she would like to be back at Blackheath. If by any chance Alice were ill, and she had to go to her, would you like to have a Blue Sister to stay with you? Good-bye. Do keep well and cheerful.

Havre

Saturday, 3.30 P.M. *August* 22, 1914

HERE I am, writing you a letter from an hotel, seated at a civilised table, with an ordinary pen, and a very imposing sheet of paper. It seems quite odd; though I only left Dublin on Monday night and then took to my tent, I feel as if I had not been under a roof for ages!

I think it more amusing and more healthy to live in a tent; but certainly rooms and tables and chairs are rather convenient. As there is no danger at all of this letter being "censored," I suppose we may as well recog-

nise between us that it is at Havre I have been since Thursday: or rather we arrived here, and our camp has been at Bléville, outside it.

I was not supposed to tell you; but I thought the postcards would; so, as you know, we may allude to it. The shops and houses are excellent here, but there is nothing interesting to see. Still it is a gay, pleasant town.

I have bought several things: (1) a much larger waterproof sheet, (2) a sort of goloshes or gum-boots, (3) washing-basin, (4) collapsible bath, (5) little haversack to carry a clean shirt, socks, sponge, soap, tooth-brush, etc.

I wrote to you yesterday morning while it was pouring rain: but it only lasted half an hour, and has been ever so fine (and hot) ever since. I came in to Havre about twelve, and my Anglican confrère begged to come with me. I much prefer being alone, for, though he is a giant with legs a mile in length, he shambles along at the rate of half a mile an hour and tires me to death. He is very amiable, but looks and talks like an enormous Fourth Form boy.

We had lunch in here, and ate too much!

About tea-time we waddled home, at least we trammed most of the way, and had only to walk the last mile — to Bléville, where our camp is.

As we passed a rather smart house with a big garden a little girl and boy dashed out with *rum and water!* They said their Mama wished them to refresh thus the poor tired English soldiers. The French are in love with our soldiers' collar and shoulder badges and wheedle them out of the men: so that half the people you see have 20 H (20th Hussars) R. F. A. (Royal Field Artillery) etc., worn as brooches, on the lapels of their coats.

We sat and talked in the dark outside our tents till late last night, then went to our *rugs* (no one has a bed): and I slept the sleep of the just.

This morning I found a church. I stayed a long time praying there for you; but *every* where I am doing that.

We struck camp at one o'clock and late this afternoon entrain for Amiens, where perhaps I shall find letters. After that I don't know where we go, or when we move. If I find it likely that we are to stop some days in Amiens I shall send you a wire saying, "Write here Poste Restante, Monsignor Bickerstaffe" only.

Oh dear, I hope you are doing well. It is so trying never hearing anything: but it is all part of the one great nuisance. I enjoy all this in a way, but would give one ear for the war to be over, and for me to be at home.

It is so odd, living in this impenetrable silence. We see French newspapers, but not one of us has heard a word from his home.

By writing this here, and posting it "on my own," I avoid (I hope) the military censor. He only approves of a word or two, thus: "I am well. No change. X."

If I wrote "Active Service" on my letters they would go for nothing, but then I should have to let the censor read them.

I just walked in here out of the street and asked if I might write a letter and they said "Yes" at once.

How is Christie, how are the Gaters? Give them my love and thank them from me for being kind to you.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

August 28, 1914

I WROTE you a hasty scribble yesterday. We arrived here yesterday after some strenuous days: indeed it has all been pretty stiff since Sunday last. I cannot say more at present, but I shall have yarns enough to spin when I get home.

We arrived at the town near this about noon, and I was asked to go and forage for our mess, so was able to get some food (the first for nearly twenty hours) and to see the fine old Cathedral.

Then I got out here to camp, and we saw our baggage (first time since we left our landing-place) and there was a fine washing and changing of socks, shirts, etc. We were all filthy!

You mustn't grumble if the chicken or cutlet is tough, but say: "What would not Frank give for it?"

Till yesterday it was all march, march, and move, move. It is a *lovely* part of France. Here rich woods and watermeadows; *everywhere* splendid harvest-lands; in parts very like Salisbury Plain: if you can find Montaigne's Essays (in the revolving bookcase in the study, I think, or else in the one between the two windows) you will see at the beginning a picture of his birthplace — there is a house like it in every village here. The country is a picture of peace, with "War" over-printed on it. I have seen some lovely wild-flowers, new to me and perhaps rare, but have never been able to stop and pick them. Here in this field wild colchicum grows — a lovely mauve crocus with no leaf yet. I have picked some, and will try and dry it for you. The people are so splendid to our men; in every village (and we have marched through dozens) they run out and give coffee, fruit, bread, bread and jam, water, and so on. . . .

I cannot tell you in a letter what our life is like. In some ways it is simply like a titanic picnic, with a huge country for its scene, an army for its guests. We are all well, and we have had supreme weather (except for about thirty hours of drenching misery). We have never entered a tent for ten days; one eats, sleeps, does everything, in the open air on the open ground, without tent, chair, table, bed, anything. We hardly get our night through, but in the black dark have to get up, scramble our things together as we can, and be off to some new encampment.

The night dews would *amaze* you: all that is outside one's waterproof sheet is drenched, and has to be rolled up drenched. But no one has had a cold.

I am very comfortable in my "bed," *i.e.* the rugs

you saw, and sleep splendidly: all I dislike is getting up. Yesterday we had a hot dinner — fried ham and eggs: our first for days. Our food is generally bread, butter, jam, potted meat, tinned salmon, and of course we have no meal-times: sometimes two or three eatings in a day, and often only one in twenty-four hours.

Sometimes our camp is in a cornfield, and then we put sheaves under our rugs and are very comfortable; only the harvest bugs *devour* one.

Yesterday was the first of September and I actually saw a covey of partridges — it seemed so English, it gave me a lump in my throat.

A German officer taken prisoner yesterday said that their men had had nothing to eat for four days, and had to be driven to fight at the point of the bayonet.

On Sunday we were at a village called Coutroy and I had service for my men in the church. The priest had gone off to the war.

On Monday we passed close to Pierrefonds, a splendid château given by Napoleon III to the Empress Eugenie — I remember so well a picture of it she has at Farnborough. It is enormous, and gloriously placed amid vast forests. I enclose two cards of it, all crumpled, which I can't help. They have been two days in my pocket; one has nowhere but one's pocket to put anything.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 2, 1914

I AM going to try to get a letter ready to post whenever any chance arrives. It is Wednesday afternoon, and we are having a rest, perhaps until to-morrow morning, and so I can write. But there is nothing but the ground to write on, and I can't manage it very well.

We are encamped at a village called Montgé, only about twenty-four miles from Paris. It is blazing weather,

but cool in my corner of the camp under the shade of some little trees, for there is a sweet breeze, smelling of harvest.

You, with your papers, know much more about the war than we do. We move and move and move, always swallowed up in a cloud of mystery and ignorance, of which the column of hot dust that moves with us is a type. All I can tell you is this — we have been in Belgium — rushed thither at once: got on the fighting line, and ever since have been engaged in a "strategic retirement," always moving, moving back on Paris: never far from the fighting, hearing it, and never seeing it.

I cannot tell you how lovely, how rich, how opulent the leagues and leagues of land have been through which we have been ceaselessly moving: villages whose very name should be "Peace"; endless, endless cornlands, with the generous harvest all standing ready in sheaf to be carried (and *never* to be carried, because a man's wicked cruelty shall waste all that God's generous providence and poor folks' peaceful labours have drawn out of the willing earth).

Such farms, such store-places . . . everywhere the evidence of a people living in frugal plenty on the fruit of their steady, contented toil . . . and everywhere flight, and abandoning of all to the mercy of the barbarian Teutons who know no mercy. The lands are the richest, the loveliest I ever saw; and everywhere one knows that the unequalled harvest will never be gathered in. Oh, my God, what war is!

It is only at rare intervals that one can post anything.

We got in here to-day quite early (having been roused from our beds at two o'clock in the morning, in pitch-dark, to come here) and have been washing, shaving, etc.

The worst of these packings up in black darkness is that one always loses something. This time it was my clothes-brush, another time it was my big waterproof sheet only bought at Havre: and so on.

Please don't turn up your nose at rather elderly chicken! Chicken! We no more expect to see roast meat of *any sort* than we expect to be offered the throne of Germany.

And soup! or "sweets": nothing of that sort till the war is over for us. Perhaps we shall be in Paris soon . . . but we haven't the least idea.

I haven't had one letter from you, except the one sent to Phœnix Park; I don't know whether some day I shall get a great pile of letters, or whether they are all lost . . . we know the Germans got two bags full. Miles of country I have seen are just like Salisbury Plain: but in this part the wide cornlands are striped with forest.

I must stop . . . I want to sleep. I hope to be able to post this; but *when* I don't know.

The flowers I send are a field campanula and a field aquilegia.

Please send me two stocks: the best you can find in the left-hand top drawer in my dressing-table. Don't make one on purpose, as they only get knocked about here, but the dew has spoiled the one I have.

Please don't make one; as it is such a chance if I ever receive it.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Friday

It is Friday, September 4th, and I have just got two big envelopes, forwarding letters, addressed in Christie's writing; these contained two letters from you, the first I have received. One told me of your having Bert to sleep in Joe's room, a very good plan, I think.

I am so glad to hear you are well, and earnestly hope you may keep well, and cheerful too.

The weather has been quite glorious ever since I left, except on one day and a half: and I have been, and am, in excellent health. You know I dislike heat, and the heat has been amazing throughout; but I must say when

one is out in the field day and night, for week after week, it is a *mercy* to have it fine.

We originally landed at Havre and then trained to Valenciennes, whence we marched to the Belgian frontier and over it. Since then we have marched daily and are now within twenty-five miles of Paris.

All details you must wait for till I am back.

I got a lot of stuff washed the day before yesterday; but we had to go off before it was dry, and I had to roll it all up wet as it was. To-day I am drying it.

I hate the idea of sleeping indoors now: and I never feel cold, though we have thick white fogs, breast high, at night, and then fierce heat every day.

I am writing this while waiting to march; excuse its brevity and its stationery.

Saturday, September 5, 1914

I WROTE the letter accompanying this yesterday, but could not get it posted. Nor do I know when I shall be able to post this; it is only by a rare chance we run across a "field post office," and all the civil post offices are shut.

This day week I wrote a number of letters — to you, Christie, Mrs. Gater, Miss Gater, my London agent, Sir Charles McGrigor, etc., etc., and the one to you enclosed cheques. I sent them to a field post office for dispatch, and now I hear that all letters posted *closed* are torn up! Isn't it maddening — if it be true? How can I write business-letters enclosing cheques, etc., and leave them open?

We had a tiresome day yesterday. The idea was, it was to be a "rest day" and fellows had washed their clothes, etc. Then at about 8.30 A.M. we had word to hold ourselves in readiness to start, so everything was packed in five minutes, and we stood about waiting till 11 P.M. — fifteen hours! — before the actual order

to move came. And we were on the march all night, from 11 P.M. to 7.30 this morning.

A lovely march mostly, through forest, but I was too tired and cold to be enthusiastic.

We are billeted here in the grounds of a château, very like Palluau, only larger, and with finer country round it. It belongs to a Monsieur Boquet who knows Count Clary well. The latter often comes here.

Such lovely trees and flowers.

[*Visiting Card*]

Monday, September 7, 1914

No paper or postcards available: am trying this, hoping it will reach you.

Am excellently well, and hope you are. The weather splendid. Altogether flourishing. Had a long talk with Capt. Newland on Saturday: and saw several Tidworthians yesterday. Lordly forest-country all yesterday.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 8, 1914

I AM gradually losing all of the very little I have! and now I have lost my fountain-pen, and must write in future in pencil — when I can borrow one.

One can buy nothing; the few shops one comes across are closed; we so often arrive after dark at our night's stopping-place, and so often leave again in the dark, that it is only too easy to lose things.

I have been bitten from head to foot by harvest-bugs, and have been as miserable as if I had measles. So have most of us; it is from sleeping on the corn-sheaves or on the stubble. One's whole body looks like a plum-pudding, and the great heat makes the irritation worse. It is so odd knowing nothing of the outside world. I have not seen an English paper since leaving home,

nor a French one for a fortnight. We know nothing but the rumours of our own Division. Is there a new Pope, I wonder, and if so who is he? What are the Russians doing?

The other scrap was written yesterday; but I had no envelope, and no chance of posting it. I am posting this *open* and hope you will receive it safe some day. To-day is Our Lady's Birthday . . . by the time my other Mother's birthday arrives I trust I shall be with her at home. Pray for that, and for the end of the War.

The forest we marched through all Sunday was full of lilies of the valley, though long finished blooming, of course.

The lilac colchicum one sees everywhere is lovely.

Will you please write a note to P. H. Prideaux, Esq., King Edward VI's School, Lichfield, and tell him I am at the front and cannot write anything for the School Magazine till I get back.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 9, 1914

You must not think from this paper that I am a prisoner in the hands of the Germans.

For several days we have been pursuing them, and this sheet of paper is the first German trophy picked up by me yesterday. I began writing, during a halt, on a baggage waggon and I am trying to finish on the ground, during a mid-day pause for rest: it is very hard to write with only a stubble-field for writing-desk. I have just had an excellent dinner of bacon and tomatoes, and am very comfortable, under the shade of a corn-rick in a flat field on the top of a hill, with an exquisite wooded valley skirting it, and a broad quiet river winding round under the hill. The woods are intensely green, but a haze of atmosphere hangs over them.

We have now been through lots of villages and towns occupied till within a few hours of our arrival by the enemy. You have no idea of the horrible state to which they reduce every place they occupy.

Last night I was out till about 11.30, searching for wounded and we were all up again at 4 A.M. We found some English, and some German, wounded: the latter don't bear their pains half so well as our men.

All yesterday the dust on the line of march was amazing, but a heavy shower, the first for a fortnight, laid it a little.

I called on the curé of a little town where we rested for half an hour yesterday: a very friendly and nice old man with a queer old housekeeper. The whole town had been eaten up and turned out of doors by the Germans, who had stayed four days: they gave me a glass of cider and wanted to give dinner; but I doubt if they had much to eat themselves. They were so nice and simple.

The only thing I dislike is being able to wash so little and so seldom. To-day not at all. Yesterday I borrowed the pint of water another fellow had washed in and washed in it as well as I could.

But there are no hardships, only inconveniences, and our health is first-rate. Not one case of sickness among us. The open-air life keeps one well. When I come home you will see me retiring with my bedroom candlestick to the lawn or the field! But a room is certainly convenient to wash in, or write letters in.

No post for days: I wonder where all one's letters go to!

I must stop and go to sleep.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 13, 1914

I AM trying to begin a letter, but do not know if I shall soon have an opportunity of finishing it. I am *in*

a waggon, not on the box, and we have come to a halt: such halts last five hours sometimes and sometimes five minutes. Of course when the waggon is moving no one could write in it, the jolting is terrific. My desk is the bottom of my washing-bowl turned upside-down. We were roused about three this morning and have been marching ever since — it is now about eight o'clock and you have just had your early tea — and we shall go on all day.

Monday, 7.30 A.M.

I COULD not get on with my letter yesterday; I was too unwell with one of my appalling goes of neuralgia, shivering, etc. I tried to write to you and had to give it up: tried to read an old newspaper a fellow had given me, and had to give that up, too.

A young doctor, called McCurry, and generally nicknamed McChutney, came and attended to me, and was most awfully kind. For the time I really felt horriby ill, but it only lasted a few hours, and by the afternoon I was quite well. He packed me up on a stretcher in an ambulance with blankets, bottles full of hot water, etc., gave me phenacetin and morphia, and at *last* I fell asleep.

About three o'clock I awoke, shaved, washed (having a waggon all to myself for dressing-room) and was packing up my things when the order was given to move camp at once. (By the way, I began this en route; while I was ill the march ended, and we were camped when I awoke.) A cook carrying a vegetable marrow had had it pierced with shrapnel.

All yesterday (Sunday) there was a fierce battle between our advanced guard and the German rear guard.

Our lovely weather has ceased and we have rain every day now. Last night I had a delightful sleeping-place in a hole some one had pierced out of the side of a corn-rick. It was on the sheltered side and no rain came in.

The night before we slept in a house, the first I had entered for nearly a month: it was a small cottage, but the people nice, and the upstairs part of the house quite clean; we had two mattresses on the floor (seven of us!). At three o'clock we had to get up and be off. I walked all day on Saturday and as it rained and the road was churned into mud (. . . men with their horses, carts, etc., do put a road in a mess), I got into an amazing pickle, all mud. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien came by in his motor, warm and dry (a shut motor), and Capt. Bowly with him: they pointed me out to each other and waved, and seemed edified at my campaigning powers!

What makes the marches tedious is the long halts: on Saturday there was a big battle all day: and the halts were spent watching it — one doesn't really *see* much of an artillery battle. What you see is a ridge beyond which is a valley, then another ridge, and between the two a ceaseless exchange of shells and shrapnel.

It is much more interesting to see an aëroplane being shelled. I saw one the other day round which eleven shrapnel shells burst in much less than eleven minutes: it was hit five times but not brought down. The churches in the villages are all old in this part of France, and very nice; good architecture; but they are all very *poor* — everything confiscated at the separation of Church and State, and no money to buy anything but the cheapest and most necessary things.

In many of the villages are delightful old huge farms and homesteads, once abbeys, Cistercian or otherwise. This house was one, and the lovely old chapel is in the farmyard among the manure! We are only sheltering here, during a halt from the rain. I seize the opportunity to write at a table in the scullery, where the farm-girls are washing dishes.

I can only repeat again and again — don't be anxious if you get no news: the ordinary posts do not work, and it is only at rare intervals we come across a field post.

I have received no letter from you or any forwarded letters since August 28th when I received your letter of August 20th. The field post arrangements must be very odd. . . . I feel sure you have written often. Any parcel you send need only have English parcel-post rate of stamps on it. I do long to hear you are well and flourishing.

This paper has been for days in my pocket, that is why it is so dirty.

My dear, I hope you are well and happy. If that be so I am quite content, though I do long to be at home. I hope poor Christie is well. I wonder if Alice would come over and see her from Saturday to Monday or longer? Write and ask her. . . .

It is maddening hearing nothing: I have no means of knowing how you are managing.

September 14, 1914

I WROTE you a long letter an hour ago, but as we are still hanging about this farm and I have a table to write at and a pen and ink to write with, I will add a sort of postscript under another cover, especially as there is an officer of the field post writing at the same table who will see that this letter, at all events, gets off. And so (as I feel sure this will reach you) I just repeat that I am perfectly safe and sound — and quite well, though yesterday I had a perfectly horrible attack of neuralgia and a bad chill. If you read accounts in the newspapers of such and such an Ambulance suffering loss, never be anxious, but be sure that the War Office would inform you direct and at once if there were *really* any casualty. For instance No. 14 Field Ambulance, our neighbour in the field, was reported "wiped out" in some English papers: whereas it has not lost a single soul.

I should love to have a painting of this huge farm — once a Preceptory of Knights Templars. Another farm

I was at on the march here, on Saturday, was a Cistercian Abbey — at a charming village called St. Remy.

I will now try and give you roughly some idea of our movements:

August 15th I left home.
" 16 arrived at Dublin.
" 18 embarked at Dublin.
" 20 arrived at Havre.
" 22 left Havre by train.
" 23 arrived at Valenciennes.
" 23 left train and marched to Jenlain.
" 24 marched from Jenlain to La Bosiere near Dour (Belgium). (*Battle*). Marched to Villaspol.
" 25 from Villaspol to Troinvilles near Le Cateau.
" 26 big battle. Marched to St. Quentin.

and so on day after day in retreat on Paris, till we ceased retreating at Montgé, east of Paris. Since then we have been advancing. Having lured the Germans all this way we turn about and force them north. There is a battle every day, but almost entirely an artillery battle, and so we have much fewer wounded. All yesterday the battle was furious, and yet we got only a few wounded or killed.

I have one or two trophies, bayonets, etc., thrown away by fleeing Germans.

September 14, 1914

This morning I wrote you two letters and said I had not heard from you since August 28th.

Now half a dozen mails have arrived together and I must let you know I have heard.

You were well when you wrote and (I think) in good, contented spirits.

The Gaters seem to have been most kind and neighbourly, and I am truly grateful to them: and I am de-

lighted to hear how good Bert is — as I thought he would be.

I heard also from Winifred G. and she says our garden looks lovely. I'm glad you like Father Cashman; he is a good little thing and I am very fond of him.

Mind if you want any money you write to Sir C. McGrigor. As to letters it makes no difference whether you send them to him, to the War Office, or simply to the G. P. O., so long as you put on them my name and 15 Field Ambulance, Vth Division, Expeditionary Force.

Winifred G. says you did not receive my letters from Havre for nearly a fortnight. I wonder how long it will be before you receive this. You might risk sending me a box of cigarettes: postage *as for England*, Mrs. P—— would tell you. The best way would be to ask her to send them and enter it all in my book.

I do think it good and sweet of Christie staying on to look after you, and if she would like Alice to come over to see her I hope she will ask her. Why not? It costs very little, and Ver ought not to grudge her for a few days — if it were only Saturday to Monday or so. But, of course, just as Christie likes.

I have seen Sir H. Smith-Dorrien two or three times.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 16, 1914

I AM almost too sleepy to write: we (four out of the fourteen of us) have been away on special service, and were marching — really marching on foot — all last night, and all the night before. We only got back before lunch-time to the Field Ambulance, and after lunch I meant to sleep, but a long string of wounded came in, and I have been talking to the poor fellows. Two whole days and nights without sleep or rest make me very drowsy now, so excuse a dull letter, please.

We are still billeted at the big farm that was a Pre-

ceptory of Knights Templars, and I love looking at the cows and sheep in their huge stone Gothic stables, so airy, light, and comfortable, with quantities of deep clean straw. They, at least, seem unconscious of war.

We had very wet nights to march in, and it was pitchy dark. All the better as the enemy were all about.

With the dawn the battle begins and lasts till dark.

Thursday, September 17th

I ONLY got so far, and sleep overcame me, so I had to give it up, and go and lie down for an hour . . . now I will go on. It is Thursday, and we have all had a long night in bed (*i.e.*, in our blankets and rugs) because we are stopping on here, so far as we know, and not making any move — 4 A.M. is our regular getting-up time, and to-day we did not get up till 7.

On Monday night we got an order, about 9 P.M., to send off six ambulance-waggons and their equipment to a place nine miles from here, where many wounded were expected. I was not supposed to go, but said I must; and went off. We arrived just at dawn, and as we arrived the battle began. We were under fire till dark — fifteen hours, and it was very stimulating and exciting. Not *one casualty*, even the slightest, happened to any of our officers, men, or horses. Considering how incessant and fierce the fire was, the casualties even among the fighting troops were, I thought, very few.

Our field-hospital was installed in a charming small country house at the outskirts of the village, the garden delightful, sloping to water-meadows beyond which there were interlacing ridges of wood.

Our hospital flag was riddled with shrapnel, and lots of it fell in the garden and in the lane beside us. But no one got any harm there; our wounded were brought in safely.

As soon as it was dark we buried our little group of

dead, only eight, three officers, just beyond the trenches where the living men were lying in the miserable rain. A most poignant, touching sight, the funeral: brief, bare, simple, and almost silent. The enemy were quite near, listening and watching: the poor grave very hasty and shallow. One poor lad had so stiffened he had to be buried as he lay, and he had his arm up and one leg up and bent, like a reel-dancer, as though he had gone dancing to his death. The lantern light just showed them, but hardly showed they were dead: and of course there was no shroud or sheet; each was as he fell, equipped, accoutred.

Then we had to be off; our wounded had to be moved, and only in the dark could we do it. It was all very silent. From our field-hospital we had to get to the waggons, and through the empty streets of the now ruined village, all battered by shells since we reached it fifteen hours before, we had to creep quietly for fear of snipers, of whom there were plenty in the deserted black window-holes of the houses. The thick, moonless, rainy night helped us.

Presently the enemy began casting search-lights over the road we had to go: but by God's grace never did the light fall on any open stretch of road while we were on it: it only fell on our bit when we happened to be passing behind high screening hedges.

To cross the river we had to wait five hours in a long line with other troops, French and English, to get over by a small pontoon. The rain was pitiless; the mud and slush ankle-deep, all our own men and ourselves and all our wounded who *could* walk *had* to walk: and we were all drenched, whole and wounded. We did not know it then, but the enemy had shelled the bridge hardly an hour before we arrived there: if they had done it while a mile-long train of troops were waiting there they would have made a fine mess.

We got back in the forenoon of yesterday, and have

sent our wounded on to the base: only new ones have arrived. It had got fine by the time we got in.

I felt very stiff and cold from being wet so many hours, but though I was deadly tired I had determined to walk, and that prevented my taking any ill-effects. I have not caught cold, much less pneumonia or bronchitis, and though I woke very stiff this morning even that has gone off.

Our people here greeted us with great friendliness and cordiality: they had heard we were in a tight place and hardly knew how we were to get out of it, or whether we had been wiped out . . . so it was rather a triumph for the 15th Ambulance that we had brought off all our wounded, and got away without the least loss.

I must confess I don't think you would have liked fifteen hours of being under violent fire from shrapnel, lyddite, melanite, maxims and rifles: but I really *did* like it. It was far more exciting than any game, and I would not have missed it for anything. But our Commanding Officer says he shall not let his people be sent to such a place again. Of course dead doctors are not much use, and a place in the very bull's eye of the shelling is not the best for conducting critical operations on wounded men.

Many thousands of shells fell in the course of the fifteen hours: very many quite close to us, as for example at the spots marked.

The noise all day was amazing.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 18, 1914

I AM writing you this short note, not because I have anything much to say, as I wrote you and Christie a long letter each yesterday, but simply because I have the opportunity, and may not have another for ever so long.

We are still at the farm that was a Preceptory of

Knights Templars: but may get the order to move at any moment.

A lot of wounded came in this morning, but we were able to send them on within an hour or two. Meanwhile I chatted to most of them and gave Extreme Unction to a dying German prisoner. He was only twenty-one, a sad-faced, simple country lad from Prussian Poland, with no more idea why he should be killed or should kill anyone else, than a sheep or a cow. He was horribly wounded by shell fire on Sunday, and had lain out in the rain ever since, till our people found him in the woods last night (this is Thursday). Isn't it horrible to picture? starving, drenched, bleeding, so torn and shot in the buttock as to be unable to drag himself out of the woods. So his wounds had gangrened, and he must die. He could only lie on his face: he was fully conscious and joined in where he could in the responses of the office of Extreme Unction; but I know nothing more awful than the broken-hearted patience of such lads: the whole face, the dumb eyes, the agonised posture — without cry, or moan; if ever anything was an appeal to heaven from a brother's blood, crying from the earth, it was one.

I daresay you do not know any more than I did what a Field Ambulance is or does. Well, its great function is to be mobile, able to move always with the fighting troops and be at hand for the wounded in every action. So it can never *retain* the wounded it treats: if it did it would at once become *im*mobile (a hospital full of wounded men cannot rush about) and its troops would move on and leave it, and they would have no ambulance any more in attendance.

Our wounded, therefore, are always "evacuated" within six hours; *i.e.*, we send them in ambulances to the "rail-head" (the nearest place where there is a train running) where they entrain and are conveyed first to a "clearing-hospital" then to a general hospital, or perhaps direct to the "base" hospital, whence they embark for England.

I wonder if you could send me a sort of sleeveless waistcoat, either knitted or made of flannel. I could not bear or wear one with sleeves, but I might manage with only a large open arm-place and no sleeves.

Ask the Gaters to see if they could find the sort of thing in Salisbury. I believe they are made in "Jaeger" and you could pay for it. (I believe Sir C. McGrigor sent you the £15 I asked him to.) It is possible that Father Wrafter, S.J., of Gardiner Street, Dublin, would do this for you quite as well as the Gaters; if you would write and ask him: and I know it would only be a pleasure to him.

I must always beg you not to be anxious if a *long* time goes by without word of me. When we are marching we never get in touch with the field post offices, and all the others are closed. One can never buy anything, either: all shops are long ago closed: and indeed most villages and towns are deserted.

I'm so glad you saw Mrs. Profeit, and that George came to see you: I got a nice letter from him yesterday, and also a very nice and affectionate, most sympathetic, one from Benie.

Now, dear, good-bye.

God bless you both, and keep you both well, cheerful and prosperous.

My affectionate messages to the good Gater neighbours and to all to whom you write; and say, every time, to Bert and Mary and old Slade that I am truly pleased to hear how well they do *their* part in the war. I am really fond of Bert, and know he is fond of us. And Mary . . . is sound and a good, trustworthy girl.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Saturday night, September 19, 1914

ANOTHER mail arrived to-night and brought in a letter from you, dated September 6th, thirteen days ago, telling of George's arrival at your Manor House.

I am so glad he went to you and was made comfortable, and am delighted to hear how old Slade played up and rose to the emergency. I heard something to-day that made me very sad. I walked down to the Headquarters of our Division, and saw our General, Sir Charles Fergusson, who was most amiable and civil. His A. D. C. is young Lord Malise Graham, son of the Duke of Montrose (or Athole, I forget which) whom I had met before. He is a very nice fellow and we were talking together. I asked him for news of Percy Wyndham, and he said "He has been killed." I asked if there was any doubt about it, and he said, "Unfortunately, there is no doubt." Poor, dear lad! so handsome, so full of life, so happily and lately married, with all that could make life attractive. However, he died nobly for his country, and in the moment of victory.

I cannot say how much I feel for dear old Mrs. Percy Wyndham; in how short a time has she lost her beloved and brilliant husband, her eldest son, and now her grandson! This lad was the only child of George Wyndham and Lady Grosvenor.

I was down at Headquarters arranging for Mass here to-morrow, which we are having in a huge barn: probably the first time Mass has ever been said here since the Templars were cruelly suppressed five hundred years ago.

I must say I was pleased by the very kind reception I had at Headquarters from the whole staff, from the General downwards. I don't wonder the delay in getting letters tires you: but we must be patient and make the best of it.

We have got English papers with Sir John French's official dispatch detailing all the actions, including Le Cateau, Mons, etc., into the thick of which we arrived. Very interesting reading for us: but you have read it all long ago. The dispatch contains high praise of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, which specially pleased me, as he is my own general at home.

I love to hear of the garden and how nice it was looking when you wrote. I hope George will stay on with you, and cheer you with his fresh young presence: he is a dear boy and he is fond of us all. His mother and grandmother will be pleased to know he is in such good quarters.

I am off to bed; so will close this.

I daresay all my letters will not reach you: those I have been able to give myself to one of the censors will no doubt get through.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 21, 1914

We moved into this farm last Monday, and now it is Monday again — a whole week in one place and never before did we stay two nights in one place. Last night I slept in a bed! there's glory for you. Besides ourselves, nine officers have been billeted here, and they have a couple of excellent bedrooms: we are sleeping on the stone floor of the entrance hall — first come, first served, of course. Yesterday they moved off and we got their rooms. This one (I am writing in it) is large, clean, airy, and prettily papered, and the beds are new, clean, and comfortable. So, having nothing else to do, I went to bed at eight last night and had ten hours' rest. Can you imagine me five weeks without reading anything? Yet that is my plight. For five weeks I have had nothing to read.

Yesterday morning we had Mass in one of the immense Gothic barns, and it was crammed; some tell me that there were a thousand men present, but I think there were over six hundred. The men were *most* devout and full of piety, attention and interest. They sat on the hay while I preached — for over half an hour — and listened with all their eyes, ears, and mouths. An officer said afterwards, "I wished you would go on for hours." It was really interesting and impressive; the

great dim barn, the crowd of soldiers crouched in the hay, the enemies' guns booming three miles off, and the thought that once again (after five hundred and fifty years), Mass was being said in this old place of religion, built by warrior-monks, by a foreign priest belonging to a foreign army, for foreign soldiers. At the end I gave away medals, and the crushing up to get them was funny. "Here," I heard one young corporal expostulate, "this ain't a dance, and you aren't a swell tryin' to get an 'am and chicken." It was a loft-barn, and all that huge crowd had to get down by a very shaky ladder! While they were slowly getting off, some officers came and talked to me — among them young Bellingham, Lady Bute's brother, son of an old friend of mine, Sir Henry Bellingham, of Castle Bellingham in Co. Louth: also a fiery-headed Capt. McAlister, who used to come to see me about his marriage last time we were in Malta; once he lunched with us (I remember) down in the hall. He inquired with unfeigned interest for you, remembering all about your illness, etc.

The Protestant officers were all impressed by our Mass and our people: it struck them how cheery and chatty the men were, and how glad to get to Mass, though having to walk far in the rain and mud.

After lunch I walked off and gave afternoon services at two different places, preaching at each to most eagerly attentive listeners.

I wish you would write a note for me to the Reverend Mother, Sacré Cœur Convent, Roehampton, S.W., asking if she could send me some medals for the soldiers — I have given away about twelve hundred and have none left. Medals, small crucifixes, rosaries, scapulars, Agnus Deis — I could give away lots of, and am always being asked for them. If you would give the Reverend Mother my address, and tell her I asked you to write, I feel sure she would send me some. So would the Reverend Mother Prioress, New Hall Convent, Colchester.

Would you ask Mary to buy me three more pairs of those red socks I bought at Hobdens: she knows well what they are like and they only cost a shilling a pair. The colour doesn't much matter, but red, puce, petunia, plum, etc. — any such colour would do. And then would you send them to me: (English rate of postage). Tell Christie not to waste her stamps. She forwarded three letters in one envelope and put 3d on it; 1d would have done. There is no fear at all of my being charged excess postage. You must pay for the socks — I have no account there. By the way the shop is called Haskin, though it belongs to Hobdens.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 22, 1914

I WONDER whether my letters ever reach you? I have written plenty — written pretty well daily since we came to an anchor here yesterday week: but all sorts of tiresome rumours reach us of censors tearing up all letters too long for them to take the trouble of reading, etc.

Did you, for instance, ever get a letter from me dated August 28th or 29th, and containing various cheques for wages, etc.? It is a scandalous shame if they simply tear up such letters with the cheques in them without saying anything. I cannot believe it: it is very unlikely that I alone of the British forces should have occasion to send cheques home, and I cannot believe that all such cheques should simply be destroyed without explanation to the senders.

Meanwhile, if you want some money you must write to Sir Charles McGrigor and ask for it. If you send him enclosed slip I think it will be all right.

We are still doing nothing but sitting still at this farm, getting our hair cut, our linen washed, etc. A certain number of wounded come in every day, and some sick, especially men who have got rheumatism from lying in

the trenches. Very few of these are Catholics, and none of these few lately have been very serious cases.

I am ever so well, eating about ten times what I ate at home, and yet, if anything, slighter, certainly no more podgy. It was fine all day yesterday and the day before, and will be so to-day, I think; but unfortunately it rains every night, and so the plague of mud continues.

I always hoped to get back in time to keep your birthday with you at home; that, I fear, is a dream from which I must wake up; still, everyone says the war must end soon, as Germany has no money to go on with, and no reserve of men to fill up the huge gaps.

We can only pray, as I do daily and all day long, for Peace, and reunion.

George, in his letter, spoke of his pleasure and relief in finding you cheerful and bright: I was truly grateful to him for putting it in. I must praise you as I am always praising Christie, and all of them: them for their care of you, and you for doing what I asked — my last word to you was, "Keep well and cheerful till I come back."

I cannot in each letter repeat the messages I mean you to give from me. But whenever you see the Gaters say how much I feel their neighbourly attentions to you, and in your chats with Christie say how fully I appreciate her goodness in staying away from her beloved Alice to cheer and take care of you. . . .

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Wednesday, September 23, 1914

YESTERDAY I went for a walk, almost the first. . . . You see till we stopped here ten days ago we were always on the move and tired enough without extra walking, and even here we are not supposed to wander about: because one might easily walk into the enemy's lines, or outposts, or be rounded up by their Uhlans. Therefore

we never go out without leave, and are not supposed to ask for it often. Yesterday I did go, and enjoyed it. First we (myself and a young officer called McCurry, nicknamed McChutney) went down to the village, a mile away, where the Headquarters of this Division are. There I immediately fell in with Lord Malise Graham, and we had a talk about our various friends in the war. . . . He is a very nice fellow, young, handsome, *serious*, with a fine character in his face.

Then I went and said my prayers in the village church and arranged for the use of it, if I want it, next Sunday: the priest here (as is the case in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred) has gone off to fight for his country. It is a beautiful little church, at least eight centuries old, I should say.

Then we walked on and met three charming French officers, very keen about Mass next Sunday, with whom we stayed chatting for nearly an hour. McCurry thought our talk very brilliant! ("Pass the jam" is about the average of our conversation at Mess here.) One of the Frenchmen knows the Clarys well.

Next we met General Forestier-Walker: I don't mean the ghost of our old friend, Sir Frederick, but his cousin who was at Salisbury, and whose wife was Lady Mary Liddell, daughter of the Lord Ravensworth whom Athol Liddell succeeded. He was quite gushing, and insisted on driving us home here in his motor. He told me that General Drummond had gone home, suffering from a total break-down. You know he was given command of the 19th Brigade. Isn't it bad for him? I am sure he will be dreadfully cut up about it. You see in an officer of his rank it means the loss of such a chance of distinction. It was a pleasant change or outing and I enjoyed it very much.

I heard something which sounds almost too good to be true.

The Commandant told me yesterday afternoon that

he knew unofficially my name had been recommended to be "mentioned in dispatches" for what I did at Missey. That is to say for "distinguished" or "meritorious" conduct during the fifteen hours we were under heavy fire. If I *am* mentioned in dispatches it will be ripping. So old a man who comes a-soldiering can hardly hope for more than to escape being called behind-hand and lazy. Of course this may explain the wonderfully respectful welcome I got on Saturday from the Headquarters Staff, which struck me at the time.

However, though I may have been *recommended* for mention, it does not follow I *shall* be mentioned: if I am I daresay the Gaters will see it in the papers, or hear it in Salisbury and tell you.

A soldier servant washed out some linen for me the day before yesterday, and brought it back just now. It was *black*, whereas it wasn't very dirty when I gave it him to wash: so I have had to wash it all over again!

Remember *your* letters are not touched by the censors, only ours.

September 24, 1914

THIS will be a very short letter; but I have just received two from you and want to acknowledge them.

While we were on "trek" we never came near a field post office and neither got letters nor received them: now we get a mail almost every day and can post letters every day; whether they will ever go anywhere or get anywhere is quite another question.

You write as though you had not heard anything of me for ages — that was on September 12th (just twelve days ago), but I hope you will soon have a regular succession of letters. Oddly enough two of your letters arrived together, one nearly a fortnight older than the other — *i.e.*, one dated September 1st, and the other September 12th. George wrote by the same mail, a very nice letter,

indeed, dated September 11th. His letter is rather amusing and shows he has an observing pair of eyes in his head.

I saw Lord Malise Graham again yesterday down at Headquarters and gave him a letter to you to post.

Then I met some soldiers who asked if they might come up here to confession, so I said *I* would go to them, and fixed last night at the village church. About forty came, and to-day I got up in the dark — before five o'clock — and carried all the things for Mass down there in my hand and said Mass for them and gave Holy Communion.

The parish priest himself is away fighting for France in the trenches, like thousands and thousands of others. It is a lovely old church — *very* old, perhaps eight or nine centuries.

Now I am going to rest. God bless you, and may He end this hateful war.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*
Friday, September 25, 1914

I HAVE just written such a long letter to the Bishop that I will merely send you a line to say I am quite well and flourishing.

I received enclosed from George last night: isn't it a nice letter? Please keep it. I should like to keep all the letters I receive during the war.

We have now got back to fine weather: the rain all gone, the mud dried up, and we have bright sun, blue sky and cool air: much nicer than the blazing drought that came before the rain.

I wish I could draw, like you; the country is so pretty, and the villages, churches, and farms are most picturesque. But the only pictures I can make are with the pen.

Now I will stop — I said this was to be only a mere line.

[*Card*]

Friday, September 25, 1914

These cards are supposed to be extra-special — bound to reach you, and to reach you soon. I am so sorry you have not been hearing: I have written tons of letters. I assure you I am extremely alive, and you must believe I am so till you hear officially to the contrary from the War Office. I had a charming letter from George, and am so glad you had him to stay. My best love to Christie, the Gaters, etc. We are having perfect weather now, which adds much to our comfort.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

September 26, 1914

Last evening I had a cheerful letter from you dated the 15th, saying you had received mine of August 28th and September 2d. I hope that now you will be receiving a regular succession of letters.

Yesterday I walked down to the Divisional Headquarters and gave Lord Malise Graham some letters to get through for me: the General, Sir Charles Fergusson, kept me talking for half an hour. He is a most charming man, and a great friend of the Drummonds. He told me his wife wrote saying she had only had one letter and three post-cards from him since the war began, whereas he has written between twenty and thirty letters and scores of postcards. So you see you are not the only sufferer! He says some enterprising young censor has been tearing up Sir John French's letters — who doesn't see the joke at all!

Sir Charles begged me to come down and chat again.

I got a charming letter from Christie last night and will answer it this afternoon: also a card from Winifred Gater of same date, and letters from Herbert Ward and

his mother. He is near Tidworth and I hope you will be kind to him. The telegram was from Lady O'Conor, Mrs. Wilfrid Ward's sister, and was about Aubrey Herbert, youngest brother of Lord Carnarvon, and cousin of the Portsmouths. I do hope his wounds are not severe and that he is no longer missing.

This is only to tell you I am quite well. I must shut up and go down to Headquarters to arrange about to-morrow's Masses. (This is Saturday.) You will get a grey post-card (posted to-day) on Monday because a King's Messenger is taking it in his bag.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Sunday, 7.30 A.M., *September* 27, 1914

YESTERDAY afternoon I got your big envelope, enclosing the two stocks and the bit of silk, and by the same post a letter from Christie, one from Father Mather, and one from you, all speaking of your being jubilant on account of a budget of letters from me. I wish you would *always* date your letters, and also mention the date of the last of mine received. The stocks seem to have been sent off on the 16th, and so they took exactly ten days to arrive — as the King's Messenger does the journey from London to us in twelve hours, I can't think why it should require ten days for an ordinary letter.

We have just had a very annoying false alarm. . . .

Yesterday being Saturday I arranged with the General commanding this Division, Sir Charles Fergusson, to have the troops here for Mass to-day at 7.30 and at the village church at 9.30. Lots of troops were coming, and yesterday afternoon I was hearing the confessions of lots of men anxious to go to Communion to-day . . . when, lo and behold, at 4.20 this morning, comes a motor-bicyclist messenger with a dispatch, "Be ready to move at once," and all were up and off. The altar I had rigged

up yesterday with all the Mass things on it had to be packed up instantly, and all, officers and men, had to gobble up anything ready in view of a day's march and no regular meals.

I was the last reluctantly to break my fast. Almost as soon as I had done so news came, "False alarm; carry on as usual."

It is maddening; of course the men are disappointed, and wonder why there's no Mass: and it all upsets me and makes me feel quite ill.

No doubt lots of men will roll up just because the Mass has been countermanded.

Father Mather wrote in excellent spirits and seemed to be enjoying his brief visit to you.

Michaelmas Day, September 29, 1914

We have been so long stationary in one place that you must expect monotony in my letters. . . .

Yesterday afternoon I walked with one of our officers to a village about four miles from here, chiefly for the walk, and partly to buy anything we could see for our Mess. What we did see was a goose (the first in mufti), which we bought for to-night's dinner in honour of St. Michael.

It was a very pretty walk — into another valley, deep, green, wooded like this one, and hiding long stone villages and farmhouses with barns fit for churches.

At C. I bought some shiny gaiters to wear when the muddy weather returns: they were not splendid but neither were they dear.

(How deeply interested the censor will be in these important particulars! One almost feels bound to invent something a little exciting to put in, lest he should fall asleep in reading!)

I enjoyed the walk, the getting away from the group — a lot of people together never do suit me — and the

quiet talk with one person. My companion was a fellow called Thomson, a doctor, of course, but really a civilian: out here as a volunteer. As a volunteer he went out to the Balkan war last year, and he seems to have been everywhere — in the China revolution, in Canada, in Australia, etc. He is a nephew of Labouchère, the *founder and originator of Truth*, and also of Thorold, Bishop of St. Albans, whose children became Catholics (one of them, Algar Thorold, I knew well years ago).

This morning I went out, attended by my servant, armed with a market-basket, to buy some vegetables if I could. We found a small, rather prosperous-looking farmhouse, lonely in a narrow gorge-like valley. The farmer, with two men, we saw gathering Indian corn for the cattle. He smiled and assumed (very easily) an expression of complete stupidity . . . of vegetables, apparently, he had never heard. But his wife "understood vegetables and anything else we wished," so we went on to the homestead. The woman — comfortable, sagacious, as hard as a brick — with four children, came out to parley. The children all idle and bored, schools being shut, "cause de la guerre."

I was careful to show my money. I am always in dread of these poor folk thinking one comes to get their stuff out of them for nothing. Would she sell us as many vegetables as she thought two francs would justly buy?

She evidently meant to — and did. But while digging the potatoes, onions, carrots, etc., she spoke — and, as I thought, wisely.

"Money!" says she. "Look at those four little ones with each a mouth — and their father has a mouth, too — all open. And, when winter comes, what shall I put in, if I sell away all the stuff we have planted and watered for our winter provision? Presently you go back *chez vous?*" ("Please God," says I).

"*Bien!*" says she. "You go back: and you find your

stuff there: but we stay, and see — ours is all gone, if we sell it to you. Thus does it seem to me."

However, she filled the basket, and put in a little extra after I had given her small girl two sous to buy sweets.

I cannot tell you how entirely reasonable I thought the poor woman, who looked at it all from the point of view of a mother with four children and a big fifth child of a husband. Still, I did argue a little — to encourage her.

"Doubtless Madame understands," said I, "that it is not our joke that we come here to France, some to get killed, some to have their ears blown off, and so following. It is perhaps —"

"*Nous aider*," she chipped in, "*bien*."

"*Alors!*" say I. "You give me ten francs' worth *for* ten francs; and keep the rest. If we had stayed at home it would have been the Germans who would have taken all — and there would have been no francs."

"*C'est ça!*" says she.

It was an interesting visit: a tiny war parenthesis.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*
Written September 30, 1914, *will be posted*,
October 1, 1914

To-morrow, Thursday, will bring us a new month. Saturday will be your birthday, and this year you must keep it without me — the first time for two-and-twenty years. Well, I shall say Mass for you, and say many, many prayers for you, though that I am continually doing.

Yesterday morning we had Mass for Michælmas in our huge barn loft; and a number of men came to it; just behind the altar was the back of the great dove-cote — a fine architectural feature of the great range of once monastic buildings: and the pigeons kept up a pleasant

mothery noise all the while. "Boo-hoo" they seemed to be saying to War.

I wrote a long letter to Mr. Gater this morning and it took all the time; it was on business and I daresay he will bring it to you. It contained a sort of explanation about what money there would be in case of my death. I feel uncommonly lively, but one may as well be business-like and get things ship-shape. Yesterday afternoon I went for a walk all alone, which I do not often do; we are not supposed to wander forth without leave or saying precisely where we are going and our C. O. does not like me to make a practice of it lest I should be snapped up by Uhlans (I've never seen one yet) or saunter into the enemy's lines! However, it was rather a treat, the purposeless stroll all alone, with no one to make talk for, just through the woody valleys and not to any town or village. The path led through a delightful wood, lining a deep valley with richly cultivated bottom, very secluded, silent, and peaceful; you might have forgotten there was any war but for the monotonous boom of the guns, and for the busy aëroplanes spying far up in the blue — one of these last came down most beautifully, in a perfect cork-screw spiral of very narrow radius. I said my rosary as I walked, and picked this flower for you — very pretty when I did pick it. I loved my walk and the quietness and loneliness of it; of course I was thinking of you all the time and as homesick as if I were five and forty years younger and a small boy at school.

Thursday, 8 A.M.

Well, October is come in — come in wreathed in cool smiles, brilliant but autumnal. By 6.45 I was out and enjoying a short stroll with my French dog. (I don't know to whom he belonged originally — not to the people of the farm — or whence he came, but he has

adopted me and goes where I go, sits under the table at my feet at meals, and always turns up whenever I go out.) It all looked lovely, though not so exquisite and unearthly as last night after moonrise, when the moonlight and the opal relics of the sunset were rivals in the sky.

There has been no return of the rain yet and the health of all our troops is splendid. It is no longer warm, but not really cold: of course we have no fires and are in no hurry for the cold weather.

Friday, October 2, 1914

I WRITE this from a new place. I was peacefully darning my socks last night, just before dinner-time, when orders came for an instant move and off we came. It was a lovely night, with a huge moon, and the "trek" was not long, so I quite enjoyed it. One could see the beautiful country through which we were passing perfectly, deep, deep valleys brimming with shining mist, wooded ridges rising like islands above the white sea of fog; then, in other places, no mist but clear field and spinneys, camp-fires setting their yellow and red lights against the moon's silver-blue. There were big groups of soldiers sitting around these fires, with wonderful effects of black and red. I wish to goodness I could paint; what studies I could get here! Halfway along the march I felt a little soft push against my leg and there was my French dog, who was determined not to be left behind: and here he is — here he was, indeed, the moment I arrived last night. I spent most of yesterday walking: a little stroll before breakfast, a walk in the woods between breakfast and lunch, after tea a walk with one of our Majors, and then the march.

We are again billeted in a very good house tacked on to an old ruined castle: the latter exactly the sort you may see in dozens of Irish villages; a thick round tower almost without windows, and not much else: the cabins huddled close up against it.

At our last place we could post letters every day and got mails four or five days a week — I don't know how it will be here.

The man who owns this château or farm is away fighting at the war and his father is in charge here: he is a grim, rather dismal person who mopes around, bemoaning the war — it has cost them, he says, 60,000 francs here already — that is £2400.

When I have done writing this I shall read: there are plenty of books here — the first I have seen since leaving home — mostly French translations of English books. I shall start on Pickwick in French.

I hope you will have a nice day for your birthday to-morrow. It is dull here to-day, with a Scotch mist; so that we are lucky to have an excellent roof over our heads.

I think my letters get duller and duller; but here one hears of nothing but the war, and it is exactly the thing one must not write about.

Sunday, October 4, 1914

I AM writing this at a comfortable writing-table in a very beautiful room of a singularly beautiful and interesting château. It was once a great Cistercian Abbey, and in the huge and lovely ruins of the Abbey Church I said Mass this morning. We arrived here last night at about eleven o'clock: and most lovely the ruins of the abbey looked in the brilliant moonlight.

The château we found full of "bosses" — Headquarters of the Brigade, Headquarters of the Division, etc., troops everywhere: the whole beautiful park a camp.

Our billet was a barn, deep in clean straw where we were very comfortable, but where the rats were also very comfortable and at home.

I got up early and as soon as I could get hold of any of

the Staff people I arranged to have Mass in the ruins at 9.30.

The Comte and Comtesse de Montesquiou-Fezenzac, to whom the castle belongs, came and were very much edified and pleased. They talk excellent English and the Comte told me he would give me a room to write to you in.

So here I am; the castle is really huge and fine, the rooms very large and beautifully designed, furnished, etc. It is the most charming and most imposing private house I ever saw in France.

And the Chatelain and Chatelaine seem very nice people. The abbey was destroyed at the Revolution about one hundred and twenty years ago, the magnificent church dating from 1250, about — it is quite immense, as big as a cathedral.

I will try and get some picture post-cards to show you later on.

I thought much of you yesterday, and hoped you were well and happy on your birthday; but I could not drink your health in anything stronger than water.

We left our last place about six o'clock last night and got here about eleven.

All afternoon I was darning my socks — quite successfully. I must stop now. With best love to Christie.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Tuesday, 8 A.M., *October* 6, 1914

On Sunday I wrote to you from the château of Longbridge. (There's no such castle in France, but Longbridge is my nickname for it, in allusion to an anecdote which I will tell you some day.) After luncheon I went for a walk about the place; the park, woods, etc., remind one very much indeed of Wardour, except that the ruins at Wardour are those of a castle and those at Longbridge are abbey. That first walk I took by myself: and said

my rosary for you meanwhile. It was all marvellously beautiful and picturesque, the woods full of troops and picketed horses exactly like some picture by Détaille. At one point in the woods there was a pretty waterfall at which two soldiers were shaving! As soon as I got back from my solitary walk I went for another with one of our officers. At nightfall we marched and arrived here at six o'clock yesterday (Monday) morning, after ten or eleven hours on the road. We are in very comfortable quarters, — beds, chairs, washing-stands, etc., and it is all exquisitely clean and fresh. Quite close to us are the ruins of another abbey, with a perfectly lovely and intact rose window in the western gable. About a mile beyond the ruins, or less, is a magnificent castle perched high on a rocky, wooded bluff — as fine as any I have ever seen in France: oddly enough it belongs to people of our name, Dru: for Dru and Drew are both given indifferently in Domesday Book to the same man, our famous founder. The little village, instead of cowering *under* the castle as so often happens, hides behind it on the top of the rock. The church is interesting and contains many ancient pictures given by M. and Mme. Dru of the castle. After luncheon I walked through the woods behind this house and got magnificent views of the castle, quite different from those one gets from the road. . . .

Last night we stayed on here, and had a luxurious sleep in excellent clean beds and this morning I had some warm water to wash in! There's glory for you. My new servant is a treasure.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

8.30 A.M. *October* 10, 1914

EXCUSE this paper being a little dirty — I began and got as far as the date yesterday, and had to pack up, so that the paper and my brushes, sponge-bag, etc., have been jumbled together all night.

I have been doing a good bit of marching (I mean real marching on foot) lately: and we have been moving each day, so that we have not had any letters — we only get them when we are stationary for a day or two.

You must not picture me sleeping out in the fields now, for I have slept indoors quite a long time: sometimes in a regular bed with sheets, and sometimes on the floor in my own rugs. I can always sleep very well in the latter, and do not find it at all uncomfortable or cold.

Also we have had heaps to eat. On the line of march meals are odd and taken at odd times: but when we are stationary we get regular meals at regular hours.

On Tuesday afternoon we left the place near which was the fine family château I told you of. We marched through several villages to a town called St. Martin and there slept. At 6.15 on Wednesday we breakfasted and at 7.15 marched again, passing through many villages with interesting old churches and one with a fine calvary at its entrance.

About midday we reached a place on the railway and at 6 P.M. were entrained and moved on. It was nearly eight weeks since we had been in a train before. The Commanding Officer and I had a first class to ourselves (my French dog shared my half of it). I am treated as senior officer in everything except the command, and get best bed, best place, etc.: so you see I do get some good out of being a "full Colonel."

It was on the morning of that day I met Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and had the talk I told you of. I expect Lady Smith-Dorrien has been to see you by this time. They are a most devoted couple and she, too, must be sad without her man. It was bitterly cold that night in the train, but as soon as the sun was up next day it got brilliantly fine and very warm. Besides I was marching again and that soon warmed me. We marched some five or six miles to a big town called . . . and

another five beyond it; then a long halt to await orders; at 6 P.M. set off again on a further march of twelve miles. At 1 A.M. (in the middle of the night) we reached our billet — a small, not very clean farm. However, the kitchen was warm and we had a meal and went to bed. I had quite a grand one and the farm folk made no end of a fuss of "Monseigneur" — certainly the first they had ever entertained.

Last night at seven o'clock we marched to a village called . . . and had good beds there. We were all in different houses, I, my servant, and another officer: I used the Oxo cubes Winifred Gater sent, and with the beef-tea they made and some ration biscuit we made an excellent supper.

At 6.30 we marched on here — only two or three miles: and here we are stuck till two or three in the afternoon waiting for motor lorries to carry us forward.

Unfortunately the long stops are always in poky, uninteresting places; if we come to a Cathedral town with things to see we skirt it, or hurry through at quick march with no chance of seeing anything. I hope you are all well and flourishing. My best love to Christie, and to the Gaters; and be sure to tell Bert how grateful I am to him for his care of you all.

Now I must stop, simply because there is nothing to tell you.

Monday, 4 P.M., *October* 12, 1914

I AM always having to apologise for my note-paper; by keeping a sheet or two in my haversack I can often write you a letter during a halt, or at some place on the march, when otherwise it would be quite impossible. But then such sheets of paper have to be crunched up with all the other contents of the haversack, and get dirty and crumpled.

This morning we had to be up soon after four o'clock,

and dress nearly in the dark to get off by six: and just as we were starting, an enormous mail was put into my hands — five fat parcels and close on fifty letters.

The parcels were (1) cardigan jacket and three pair of red socks from you, but addressed by Mrs. P——; (2) a writing block and indelible pencil from Mrs. Gater — very useful: and I wrote to her on it during a halt on the line of march to-day, (3) some books from Chatto, (4) ditto from Smith, Elder & Co., (5) a packet of things for the men from my kind Jesuit friend at Gardiner Street, Dublin, Father Wrafter, who says he is also sending a rug for myself. His affectionate kindness all along has been most touching, seeing how very brief our acquaintance was.

So far I wrote this afternoon: now I begin again at 9 P.M. but am too sleepy to finish, having been up since soon after four.

This evening I had another big post, with two letters from you — one telling me of Christie's departure, and of Winifred Gater's arrival. I am so sorry to hear of Ver's being ordered away: it will be a trouble to Alice and her mother, and of course they will be anxious for him. Still I am glad to think there is the Manor House for you all to be together in.

I also had charming letters from the Duchess of Wellington, Christie, the Gaters (Mrs. and Miss), Herbert Ward, Father Wrafter (2), Father Keating — also S.J., Father Mather (2), and the dear Bishop — a most delightful letter full of *heart* and cheerful encouragement. He speaks with admiration of the courageous, cheerful letters he has had from you.

I got your letter long ago with the white heather, and am pleased that you had mine with the bits of flowers I enclosed.

The Duchess said you had written her a delightful letter: and both she and her husband seem to have been immensely pleased with my letter to her. I'm

glad you had so nice a letter from Lady O'Conor: she is a most faithful, warm-hearted friend, and has never cooled or wavered in a friendship of over thirty years' standing. It touches me to hear of her speaking as if it were anything to my credit that *I* should remain unchanged in spite of having become a "famous author."

So Jack and George are both officers — and Herbert Ward too: how the world hurries these days!

You say the frost has finished up asters, begonias, etc. Here we have had some night frosts, but I see lots of begonias in the gardens we pass.

It is hard to describe my recent occupations, as they have all consisted of movements from place to place, and I must not mention any of the names of those places.

Here we are, for the first time, quartered in a town (about the size of Salisbury), with quaint, twisty streets, a huge "place" with a marvellous thirteenth-century belfry in the midst of it, a fine church, and some fine Renaissance houses.

Now I cannot hold my eyes open and must go to bed.

I am glad you like hearing of my French dog: poor little beast, he is so fond of me, and has followed me such a huge distance. But he can't abide my going into a church, because he mustn't, and it makes him frightfully jealous; he can't make up his mind if I go in to eat wonderful meals or to pat some dog whom he suspects but cannot bite.

Friday, October 16, 1914

Since Monday I have had a letter written for you but have had no opportunity to post it. On that day, about 2 P.M., I came away with a "section" of the Field Ambulance to open a Clearing Hospital here; and it is only when we are with our "unit" that we can get letters censored and passed for post. Since midday on Monday I have been busy every moment of the day, and have

been quite unable to write, nor can I write much now, as I must go off to visit wounded in another hospital — there are three for me to visit.

During the last four and a half days *all* my time has been spent in the wards attending to wounded — not spiritually only (or chiefly) but giving them tea, coffee, beef-tea, sweets (fellows with slight wounds), chocolate, bread, jam, cigarettes, etc. I had no letters for a week; then came a huge mail on Monday night, and a mail every day since. This morning I had a letter from you and two from Christie . . . I do receive all your letters and other people's — also all parcels — in time, but they come irregularly.

I have received the big box of biscuits, and distributed them, with coffee, to wounded, half an hour after I got them. Also chocolates, medals, crucifixes, sweets, etc. from nuns at Darlington, New Hall, etc., Father Wrafter, and others. Your cardigan and socks arrived a week ago: and I have had all the cigarettes.

We are in a billet here, and the people of the house cook for us — excellent French middle-class cookery — a bit *swashy*, but a welcome change after our eternal bacon and tinned beef.

The French dog has been unwell but is better: I should like to bring him home if possible. He is very well-behaved, moral, domestic in his tastes, and demurely intelligent, but I fear egoistic and absorbed in his own creature comforts.

It is odd being in a town -- this first time during the war: but I have been too busy to sally forth and view it.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Sunday, October 18, 1914

I HAVE just been told that they are sending letters to the field post office immediately, so I can write you

a mere word to tell you I am all right — well in health, and in very comfortable quarters.

We are where we have been all the week, in a country town of 65,000 inhabitants in charge of a temporary hospital: and I have been very busy all the time.

I say Mass at seven o'clock each morning in the chapel of a permanent hospital taken care of by Franciscan nuns, of whom two are Irish: dear creatures.

I heard another priest's Mass this morning before my own — a man with a handsome, keen, manly face: and when he took off his vestments in the sacristy at the end of Mass, he was a French soldier in red pantaloons, huge knee boots, etc.! It does seem to me so touching — these poor priests having to go off and soldier. You understand he is not a chaplain; just a private soldier.

You are not to bother about me and the cold: remember we are indoors in good quarters, and I do not in the least believe I shall feel the cold. The French dog sends his love.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force,*
Tuesday, October 20, 1914

I MET one of the Staff of our Division just now, and he congratulated me on my name having been mentioned in dispatches — published in the *Times* of yesterday, October 19th, which a King's Messenger brought out here. He also said, "You will be mentioned again for subsequent services."

I *am* glad, I must say. . . .

All last week we were very busy in our temporary hospital, but now we are slack again, and there are not many cases left in it, and no new ones have come in hardly during the last forty-eight hours.

It is the same in the other hospitals in this town which

I attend as chaplain — most of the cases gone off to the "base," and no new ones arriving.

I have been given such a lot of things lately: Father Wrafter sent me a beautiful rug, large, warm, and soft as silk: six large white silk handkerchiefs, one pair of soft grey leather gloves, one pair soft brown wool-lined.

Madam Clary sent me long knitted socks, six fine cambric handkerchiefs and cashmere socks.

A certain General Hickey . . . on being invalided home gave me as follows: a soft woollen shirt (just like silk), I've got it on now; a soft Jaeger jacket as light as a feather, but very warm; inner vests, drawers, socks, woollen helmets, large towels, etc. I have given some of them away and kept the rest. They would cost a lot, and are a most useful gift — please don't encourage anyone now to send me anything. I have *more* than I want: also I receive abundant presents of cigarettes, etc.

Don't let the Gaters send more; they will need to be thinking of Cyril and *his* needs.

I must stop now. I hope you are well, and in good spirits. Don't imagine me enduring any hardships, for we are in excellent quarters. And go on looking forward to my speedy return.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Friday, October 23, 1914

I HOPE you are quite well. I have had plenty of parcels from all sorts of people, but no letter from you lately: and most of your recent letters were undated. Oddly enough, any letters from Dublin reach me much more quickly than those from you or other places in England.

I haven't much to say now that I am writing: because, though we have been very busy since coming here, it is

always doing the same thing, *i.e.*, attending to wounded.

There are four hospitals which I visit, and they are all receiving a constant stream of new wounded.

This is so terribly sad and depressing to me to see, that I don't feel equal to writing about it too.

I am quite well and am in very comfortable quarters; in a house quite close to our temporary hospital. The nights are cold now; but instead of sleeping in the fields I have a most sumptuous bed (with sheets, blankets, etc.) to sleep in; nor is it at all likely we shall sleep out any more.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Saturday, October 24, 1914

TEN weeks ago to-day I left home to join my unit at Dublin . . . it seems like ten months, *at least.* Your last letters have not been *quite* so cheerful as the earlier ones, as though you were finding it hard to keep up your courage — but cheer up, I believe the war is really coming to an end. In this battle which still continues there have been many, very many, wounded: but we hear that our own losses are *nothing* compared to those of the Germans; and the places of the German killed are taken by boys and old men, which shows their reserves are being quickly used up.

Austria *cannot* fight much longer, and would not be fighting now if she pleased herself. I believe that the enemy will soon want an armistice. . . .

The French dog sends his love and begs to say that he hopes to see you some day.

Father Wrafter continues to send me parcels of all sorts of things for myself and for the men. Isn't he wonderfully kind?

I'm sure you'll say this is a very dull letter; but I mayn't tell you war news, and there's nothing else to tell.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

October 27, 1914

Though I wrote to you yesterday I forgot to mention what I was thinking of when I began writing — that it was thirty-six years ago yesterday that I became a Catholic: the really great event of my life.

This letter can only be a mere "Good Morning" for I have nothing to say.

For over two weeks now my time has been entirely spent in work among the wounded, in hospitals, and one day is exactly like another.

Yesterday at sunset I buried the German lad to whom I gave the Last Sacraments the day before. It made me very sad.

Just before that I found two German prisoners in a ward at one of the hospitals, and one of them heard me talking in German to the other. "Who are you talking to?" he asked; "am I not the only German here?" (He was wounded in the chest and unable to sit up and look round.) I told him there was another German there and had them put side by side, so that they could talk to each other, and they both seemed delighted. One of them thought he would reward me by a little flattery and asked if I was not a German Bishop. (I can really speak very little German and he knew it well.) Another German prisoner, in our own hospital here, was found to have six gold watches on him! So I fear he had been making a collection of them. . . .

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Thursday, 9 A.M., *October* 29, 1914

PLEASE excuse this funny little French envelope: I had about two hundred envelopes and lots of paper the day before yesterday, but gave one envelope and one

sheet of paper to each man who asked me, and it all disappeared. So now I have left no envelope but this one till I buy some more in the town.

Of course I can buy nearly everything here, for the Germans have never been here: in the towns where they *have* been one can buy nothing, as everything has been swept away. As I went out to Mass this morning, about six forty-five, it was just like a London morning in late autumn, a chill white fog, with black houses and trees groping through it. (I was very glad we were not sleeping out but in excellent beds.) Now, however, the fog has nearly gone, and will soon be gone quite, the sun is bright and we shall have another lovely day like yesterday and the day before. I wonder if I shall have any more marching — I like it, and the pictures it has left in my memory are cheery and pleasant — except of the earlier marches when we passed over ground where there had been shelling or fighting.

After writing to you yesterday I worked hard in our own hospital till three, lunched, and went off at once to No. 6 Hospital, where I was busy for a long time giving the Last Sacraments to English and German soldiers.

There was a good many German wounded prisoners, besides those dangerous, practically dying cases I have just mentioned. It is extraordinary how their officers keep them in the dark. None had the least idea whereabouts in France they were: some did not know they were in France at all, and many thought they were on *the coasts!* (Embarkation for England, I suppose.) They are almost all nice fellows, some few not, but very few.

One lad under eighteen and looking fifteen, was most touching. Such a baby, with such childish manners, yet fully conscious that he was dying, and quite cheerful about it — only hopping with eagerness at sight of a priest. I suppose I shall always look back on this as the most *interesting* time of my life, however sad it may be.

We all feel sure that the war is on its last legs. I believe this battle will about end it: the Germans have failed (1) in the attempt to reach Paris; (2) in the long battle of the Aisne — the longest in history, with the largest number of men engaged; (3) and they have failed here. They meant to turn our left and get round *that* way towards Paris. And they wanted to get to Paris and they have failed: on the Belgian coast they have been hammered horribly.

You will see that I am right and that the enemy will very soon be crying out for an armistice. After her treatment of Belgium and French towns and villages she will never let it come to an invasion of Germany by the French and Belgians.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

This will be a very short letter. Still it will tell you that I am very well and flourishing, and have heaps to do, which always suits me.

Yesterday I got a heap of parcels (three from Fr. Wrafter) and your letter of the 18th; that is not so bad, arriving in exactly a week. I think you may be always sure of my getting your letters sooner or later. Father Wrafter sent me two hundred more cigarettes for myself, besides all he sent for the men.

Yesterday I gave the Last Sacraments to a German prisoner, most devout, and only eighteen. He died almost at once, but thanked me again and again for my ministrations. "O dear God! What will my mother do?" he kept saying. "Only eighteen, and to die to-day. Yes, to-day. And I have done no harm to die for. Oh, my poor mother! She will look always for me coming back, and never shall I come. Try to sleep? I shall sleep without any trying, and no trying will ever waken me . . ."

Thank God our fellows are *most* kind to the German

prisoners. They would do anything for them: does it not show a noble nature in them? You will see a rough English soldier strip off his own great-coat and give up his own blanket *eagerly* for a prisoner, and he feeds his prisoner like a *pet* (like a wounded rabbit or bird!) and would steal any other fellow's grub to give to his prisoner. . . . When I think of our soldiers I never know whether to laugh or cry.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*
Friday, 2 P.M., *October* 30, 1914

I WROTE to you this morning, and now I write another this afternoon just to tell you not to be surprised if there follows a period of hearing nothing: for we have *just* received orders to clear our hospital, and to rejoin our headquarters to-morrow, and perhaps shall have no chance of writing or posting letters for days to come — on the march we never can.

The building we have been using as a hospital since last Monday fortnight, *i.e.*, since October 12th, is to be used as a temporary hospital for Indian troops, and we move right away. We have had more than 2500 patients and the work has been very heavy, and very sad sometimes. A little marching will be a relief to the mind and heart, though we shall not be so comfortably placed as to food and quarters.

The room where we eat and sit, when we have time to sit, opens out of the kitchen where there is a baby — from that baby I shall part with perfect resignation. He has never ceased yelling ever since we arrived.

My first is in *b*ed but not in pillow
My second's in *e*lm but not in willow
My third's a drink for afternoon
My fourth's the first letter of honeymoon
My fifth is the fifth of English vowels
My sixth is in *n*apki*n* but not in towels

My last is in *e*ating and sle*e*ping and b*e*ating
My whole is a town where your son is now writing
While others are noisily shelling or fighting.
There's a puzzle for you.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*
Monday, 8.30 A.M., *November* 2, 1914

I WROTE the enclosed on Friday when I heard we were leaving B. but, after all, had no means of sending it to the field post and have been carting it about with me ever since. We left B. about nine on Saturday morning: I said Mass at the chapel of the nuns in charge of the civil hospital, and said good-bye afterwards to the two dear Irish sisters and the Reverend Mother. Then I ran home, had some breakfast, and off we marched. My French dog got lost in the confusion of departure and was left behind: an officer in Béthune has promised to bring him on, but I am very sad about it, because the poor animal is so devoted to me I know he will be wretched.

We arrived about four o'clock at a long, clean village called M. and there found billets: for the men, horses, waggons, etc. at the village school, for ourselves in the château. That château will have to come into some book of mine — evidently built about 1720 by some family of distinction (the Barons de R.) and now bought by a decent middle-class man for the sake of the farm only.

The house large, fine, and in perfect repair indoors; out of doors just beginning to show signs of neglect and decay. A magnificent gloomy staircase of rosewood; suites of locked rooms, and for us the whole second floor; above, a wilderness of ghost's bedrooms. My own room was very comfortable, and though I fully expected to see a ghost, I did not! The lawns and gardens outside the château are turned into fields, except an *island garden* with a stone-walled moat round it, approached by a lovely stone bridge of five arches, and glorious

wrought-iron gates: *that* garden is simply left to itself, and has chosen to be a wilderness of tangled trees and shrubs.

Yesterday morning (Sunday) at eight o'clock, I said Mass in the village church — very large, old and fine, in excellent state, with a charming old Dean and parish priest. There was a large congregation, to whom he belauded me from the pulpit!

He told me that the village used to belong to the Montmorencies, who were Dukes of it. I never saw such a clean village anywhere — by the way, it is large for a village, three thousand inhabitants. At 9.30 A.M. we marched again through H. and other villages and towns to P. where we rejoined the Field Ambulance after three weeks' absence: and where we found letters, etc. I had two from you, besides others.

It was rather odd, but the moment we rejoined Headquarters (within a quarter of an hour) orders to move again arrived: and we were all soon on the march — a most lovely day it was for it, sunny, still, cool but not cold. A fortnight ago the Germans had been at P. and had demanded of the curé the keys of the church tower that they might mount a maxim gun at the top. He tried to explain that the sexton in the village had the keys, but they would not listen, put him up against the wall, and shot him.

As we marched we had to stop to let a very long line of French African cavalry go by (Moroccans); pretty wild looking, but fiercely picturesque.

The country here is absolutely flat. Not beautiful, but homely and prosperous-looking, and there are delightful churches, farms, cottages and windmills, the latter of this sort (*Sketch*).

Long after dark we reached our billet, the farm attached to a huge lunatic asylum.

I slept *in* the asylum as the guest of the director: and have never been so well-lodged during the campaign.

The main body of the asylum is like a really beautiful palace, the director's quarters constitute a large separate block like a good country house: and the staircases, corridors, rooms, etc., all very fine and also very convenient. The park is lovely, and it contains isolated chalets for some of the rich patients, who pay £500 a year each.

The director is a most kind, genial man, and his wife and children charming. In charge of the eighteen hundred patients are seventy nuns.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

6 P.M., *November* 2, 1914

I AM writing this in a priest's house (while the priest eats his supper), with the priest's pen (which is horrible), because I have the opportunity, not because I have anything special to say, seeing that I wrote to you this morning. But very likely we shall be marching tomorrow, and I write when I get a chance.

I hope you will not judge of my health by my writing, and think it in a feeble state when the writing is like this — it all depends on the pen.

My health is quite excellent, and no wonder, seeing what a lot I eat, and that I digest it all perfectly.

The priest in whose house I write is the chaplain of the lunatic asylum where I slept last night: he is a nice man, kind and courteous, but rather Flemish, and when he talks to his servant I can't understand much. All the same we are still in France, so far. The director of the asylum gave me some charming picture postcards of the place this morning, and when you see them you will say they are very pretty.

This morning I went over much of the asylum with him, and it is really beautiful — like a French palace in a beautiful "parc" — not *park*.

I received this cheque just after I had given in my letter to you this morning and so I send it on to you in a postscript.

Bert will always get any cheque cashed for you, and with this one you can pay some wages.

I also received a dear, but rather sad letter from you in which you seem to think I was cross with you for wanting me home: *indeed I was not.* I think it most natural you should want me home, and most just, as you may be sure it is where I would like to be: indeed, from the beginning to now you have been quite splendid, and no one could have been more self-sacrificing and good.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*
November 4, 1914

THIS will *really* be a short letter; because to make it so will be my only chance of getting it off by this mail.

I have been writing all morning, chiefly to thank people who have sent large parcels of things for the men: and now the post-orderly will be off in a few minutes.

We are still in the same place, resting, and I still sleep in the Director's Mansion of the Lunatic Asylum.

Yesterday we saw a whole community of Belgian nuns, evicted from their convent, coming in over the frontier each carrying the little bundle that was her all; it gave a peculiar impression of sadness and war-ruin to see these poor, orderly creatures, whose lives are habitually so retired and private, tramping along in the confusion of a road which had three columns of troops (Hussars, baggage-trains, artillery) blocking it, amidst all the noise, shouts, jingle of harness and accoutrements, etc.

I walked into the town — it is close to — yesterday, and saw the jewellers' windows filled with the empty cases out of which the Germans have taken everything — watches, bracelets, rings — every single thing.

I saw Gillingham again, and Colonel Boyle (who used to command the Munsters at Tidworth) he jumped off his horse and had a talk. He said, "You look a thousand times better than *I* ever saw you. War evidently suits you."

He is on the Staff here. I got quite a charming letter from the Bishop yesterday — no allusion in it to yours to him. I don't believe you will find the increased deafness permanent; I got awfully deaf a month ago, and now it is better again. Foggy, damp weather always increases deafness.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

November 6, 1914

We are still at B. with our men billeted at the farm of the asylum; and the photograph I enclose represents me surrounded by a little group of Catholics to whom I have just been giving crucifixes, medals, rosaries, etc. (The dog is not *my* dog.) You will see my servant next to myself, and a French soldier next but one to him.

A French photographer saw the men around me, and asked to be allowed to "chronicle" the group.

He sent me this proof and I thought you would like it.

Yesterday I went into B. (not the B. we were at last week) and on the way met a Captain Dunlop of the Headquarters Staff of this Division. He stopped and kept me talking three quarters of an hour; . . . then the Fourth Dragoon Guards, from Tidworth, came riding by, and some of my own boys nearly skipped out of their saddles with joy at seeing their old friend and father again. One of them, a very nice fellow called Doyle, his comrades told me, was being recommended for the Victoria Cross for splendid gallantry and saving of several lives the day before. Then the Duke of Wellington's came by — which was at Tidworth four years ago —

and a lot of them also came running up with smiles to talk and shake hands and wish good luck.

At last I got into B. It is a town of 12,000 inhabitants (doubled now by the soldier population) with a long, open market-place, a quaint belfry on the town hall, and a fine church behind the town hall: then I came home, as it was raining, and wrote letters to George Shackel, Lady O'Conor, Cardinal Gasquet, etc.

The chaplain of the asylum lets me use his study as my writing-room: and it is a great convenience.

Please do not think, my dear, that I was cross or at all surprised at your wanting me back: I think it exactly what you should want; and I can only pat you on the back for your excellent courage and patience all this time. . . .

November 6, 1914

POSTSCRIPT: We are all moving off, and (of course) suddenly, as all our moves are. We may dawdle away ever so long in a place, but our move, when it comes, always comes suddenly.

I don't know, of course, where we go, or how long we may be on this march; if long, you will hear nothing for a corresponding time.

I saw Major Newbigging (is he Major or Captain? — I forget) yesterday and had a chat. He looked extremely well as I think we all do. He enquired for you with great regard. I am *terribly* sorry for the poor Antrobuses.

[*Field Card*]

November 9, 1914

I AM quite well.
I have received your letter.
Letter follows at first opportunity.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

November 10, 1914

THE field postman is just going, so I can only put in a very short line to say I am, as I was yesterday, alive and very well. The natural result of eating very well for three months is that I am grown fat, which doesn't please me at all.

This is the nastiest billet we have had: a small and very dirty farm (about half the size of the place where Ewence, our milkman, lives) with two hundred men crammed into it. *Of course* no sanitary arrangements; but dung heaps all round. I share a room about five feet by seven with two other senior officers; when it is time to get up I go out and wash and dress in a very dirty stable. Yesterday afternoon I went for a walk with one of our officers, but I shall refuse another time, for he talked "war" the whole time, and I'm SICK of it. Fancy for three months *never* having any subject but one discussed, at meals, at any time!

I find Flemish very easy to understand though hideous to the ear, a sort of unshaped, uncouth English.

The country is as flat as the people, and as dull, but rather homely in its dun-coloured November atmosphere.

I don't call this a letter at all, but still it will show you I am alive and well.

Quite a big mail has just come in for me, and the other mail is just going out. So I can write the merest word of "How do you do?"

I heard from you (two letters: November 9th and 12th), Christie, Alice, W. Gater, the Duchess of Wellington, the Bishop, Lady Antrobus, Mr. Huntington, etc.

I enclose the Bishop's letter.

I was so glad to see the congratulatory letter of thanks from the Friends of the Poor; no wonder you are proud of it.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

November 12, 1914

AGAIN I must begin my letter by saying that I have nothing to put into it, except my love and the assurance that I am very well.

We are still squeezed into this miserable little Flemish farm (which is no more than an English cottage) and still idle. Of course there are heaps of wounded, but there are now so many *motor* ambulances out here, that run direct down to the "rail-head," that the Field Ambulance stage is apt to be skipped altogether.

To-day it is bright and clear, but there is a tearing wind, very cold, and not a dry wind, either. In the night it thundered, lightened, and hailed: and at the same time the sky was lit up by the blaze of a couple of burning villages. The artillery fire, of course, never stops: very, very rarely during three months has one ever been without it, day or night, as the dull background of sound to every other.

Yesterday morning I walked up the road to watch them shelling D., a village three miles from here, with two fine steeples: it was obvious the Germans were training on them; it is always the churches they aim at.

This region is crammed with troops, English, French, and Belgian: but above all with French, and every little farmhouse is crammed with them, too. . . .

The people are ugly, lumpish, and pudding-faced, and their language is enough to disgust a corn-crake. All this complaining tone comes from the annoyance one feels at having nothing to do, and having one's enforced leisure coincide with a place where there is nothing on earth to do or see. When I get home and come to tell you of the places I have been at you will find how few were places of special interest; *those* we have been *near*, but the fortunes of war have either kept us just away from them, or hustled us through them.

Thus we have been through Rouen, Amiens, Cambrai, St. Quentin, etc., and quite near Soissons, Rheims, Lille, etc., but never *at* them.

I wonder if you think I am still wearing the very thin suit I came out in? I am not, but am wearing a thick suit made by Style and Gerrish and sent out here: and boots like this (*sketch*) made of rubber and reaching up to the knee. So one's feet are always dry. Of course I don't *march* in them. They also come from Salisbury, made there, and sent out here.

Do you wonder if we ever get a bath? Those of us who were not at Béthune have hardly had any. During the three months' war I have had five! ! on an average one every three weeks. How I long for a daily bath, as a matter of course.

The place where I stayed in the lunatic asylum was called Bailleul: one wing of it was joined to the other by a glass corridor about one hundred yards long filled with the most *glorious* chrysanthemums; I counted one hundred and ninety-seven, each in its own big pot.

The farm which had been a Preceptory of Knights Templars where we stayed in September was called Mont de Soissons. The château of Comte de Montesquiou-Fezenzac, where I had Mass in the ruins, is called Long-point. There is no objection to giving you these names now.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

November 18, 1914

I HAVE just written to Sir Ian Hamilton, the Duchess of Wellington, Lady Antrobus, Sir Edmund Antrobus, and three others; . . . and the mail is going out very soon, so I can only send you a mere bulletin to say I'm all right — as I am, in spite of the cold.

We woke to a white and frozen world this morning; then came sun; then snow; now sun again. We have no fires, and we can't shut the windows, as the number of

us is so great for the two tiny rooms. One's feet are always cold, and that gives one a headache. But — Well, it is war, and one must expect discomforts.

The noise of the battle was so *furious* during the night, and so near, one could not sleep much: but I think our affairs are going very well.

You would not believe how entirely unconcerned one is by an incessant artillery fire, whose mere noise keeps one awake; it is a mere matter of habit.

Some one has just sent me a nice present of good things from Fortnum and Mason's — some wounded officer gone home, I expect, to whom *I* gave good things over here.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

November 20, 1914

YESTERDAY I did not write to you, the first day I have skipped when I had the chance. But directly after breakfast I went out, meaning only to stay out for half an hour; instead of which I only got back at 12.30, and found that the mail had left.

I walked to R., the nearest village, about one and a half miles from here, but along a road so blocked by artillery train, and so churned up with mud two feet deep, that it took me quite a long time to get there. Besides, I had to stop fifty times on the way to chat with French or Belgian soldiers; they seem to know me now, and are always demanding medals, etc. At R. the whole village was, as it has been ever since we came, crowded with French troops: and a long English artillery-train was going slowly through: so I stood still to chat with a young French chasseur-à-pied from Dijon with whom I was quite an old friend before we parted. It was then snowing hard, so I went into the church for shelter: I found a whole French regiment bivouacked in it. It made a most picturesque scene: the church

is old and quaint, with aisles, side-chapels, etc.: so that it affords picturesque perspectives — the men's rifles were stacked in front of statues, on the steps of the altars; the men themselves sitting, lying, standing, in groups everywhere.

Presently there was another group, specially large and ever increasing in numbers, scores and scores of soldiers, crowding in upon an elderly white-headed priest from whom they were getting medals, scapulars, rosaries, crucifixes, etc. I am very fond of *all* soldiers, but really I *love* the French ones. . . .

The flat Flemish landscape was looking beautiful as I came home: now it looks *exquisite* — deep in glistening snow, under a brilliant sun. The mud has frozen hard in the night, and the roads are passable if only the sun does not thaw them.

Can you picture *me*, in the last half of November, in a house with stone floors, no carpets, no fires, no beds, only one's rugs, deep snow outside, and hard frost? Yet really I feel the cold very little, and once I go to "bed," not at all.

I get letters from you now nearly every day, and you seem to be getting plenty from me.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*
At a Convent of Sisters of Charity
Sunday, November 22, 1914

We left our Flemish dunghill yesterday at eleven, and are now in very different quarters. However, to carry on my diary from day to day — on Friday afternoon, the day before yesterday, several of us went for a really delightful walk. The snow was everywhere, and there was the peculiar exquisite mist that goes with snow: the sun was brilliant, and the distances, in that level land, were far off, and melted out of fields and sky in equal

parts. Our little party consisted of the fellows I like best in the Field Ambulance, chief of whom is a young officer called Helm. Poor fellow, he is not long married and he has been in almost perpetual danger ever since the start: attached to a regiment *every officer* of which who came out with him has been killed, or sent home wounded, or taken prisoner by the enemy.

Well, we walked up to the firing line, and had quite an interesting time watching some big guns of ours, sixty-pounders, firing on the enemy. A funny sort of "object" for an afternoon's walk, eh?

We went for another walk the moment after breakfast yesterday (Saturday) and when we got back found the "unit" all ready to march.

The march was charming: not long and very picturesque: one felt like a man in a war-picture: the snow-landscape: the long lines of troops, waggons, guns, limbers; the cottages so like our own; farmyards with somber blue groups of French soldiers round their fires. . . .

Out of the flat Flemish fields we bore up a long, low hill, wooded, with a windmill on its crown — on the top one of our fellows photographed me, with one leg in Belgium and one in France; a group of French soldiers on my left.

I am so glad to be again in France. . . .

About four o'clock we reached this village: and our men are billeted *in* the village: we are in a convent. *Most awfully comfortable.* We have a sitting-room with a fire; excellent *beds*; real beds in bedsteads; and the bosses (I, and the three senior officers) have rooms to ourselves.

I HAVE A HOT-WATER BOTTLE!!!

The nuns are quite overcome by the honour of having a "Monseigneur" in their house, and nearly cry at the idea of my having had to sleep on the floor, and wash myself out of an empty beef-can, and so on.

I went straight to the church to arrange for Mass and

also to hear confessions: the church is pretty, and quite smart, and well-tended, and prosperous.

I am being violently urged to go out. . . . So good-bye.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Monday, November 23, 1914

My letter of yesterday trailed off into incoherence because two young officers were asking me every thirty seconds to be quick and finish it and come out for a walk. I was writing such nonsense that I gave it up at last and went. It was really lovely: the landscape exquisite and homely, like an old-fashioned Christmas-card: brilliant sunshine over the glittering white fields, and an air like iced champagne.

After luncheon we walked again — to B., the place where I was lodged in the lunatic asylum. I took my two companions to call on the Director and we went over the place again.

When I got back, there was a long letter from Mrs. Drummond enclosing an excellent one from Dr. Fison to her, as also one from Lady Kenmare. . . .

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

Wednesday, November 25, 1914

I wrote you a long letter last night which will be posted in London this afternoon. You will receive it to-morrow.

I have just received a jubilant letter from Christie — she and you had just heard that I am coming home soon. Last night the C.O. also went home on leave: he made a little speech after dinner, full of praise of my work and my influence, and saying that I should command the unit better than himself! He thanked me again in private for my "wonderful and splendid" influence here.

Mind you, these officers are almost all Ulster Protestants who came out here from Carsondom, so it really is rather a triumph to have conciliated their good will and good opinion.

There are about ten officers talking at the top of their voices, and I really can't write.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

November 25, 1914

Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien has just been to see me: a great honour from the Commander-in-Chief of the Army Corps to a humble chaplain: and he was full of most friendly cordiality and kindness. He came chiefly to tell me that he was asking for a special recognition of my services — I haven't an idea what. I write to tell you because I know it will please you.

This afternoon we — three of us — walked into B. where Headquarters are. One of them had to see the Surgeon-General. He said to him: "I see you came in with Monsignor; he is one of our great men!" Sir Horace said he had asked his wife to go out and tell you how General Porter (this very Surgeon-General) had spoken to him of my work at Béthune.

Then I asked the other fellows to wait a minute while I went and said my prayers for a minute or two in the church: but they followed, and I explained it all to them. When we got outside one of them said, "I shall always, when the day month before Christmas comes, remember how we stood in that church and you talked to us." They are all so nice and respectful to me and the religion I represent.

Last night the C. O. in his little speech said "Monsignor's presence among us has taught us all a wider-minded charity like his own, and a deeper respect for the great Church he serves." So you see, my time among them

has not been wasted. You were asked to bear a great trial, and I know it will repay you to think that your sacrifice has not been idle: and also, I think, you will understand better from all this how reluctant I was to seem *eager* to run home from my work and place here. As it is I go with a clear conscience, feeling that I owe my duty to *you* now, and that a younger man, fresh to the work, can do it better now than I could. The war is a great strain, and one grows *stale*, and new blood is wanted. As a matter of fact *many* of the Generals have been relieved, not because they were wounded, or incapable, but simply because the strain was telling and they were growing stale.

This is not like any previous war; those who were in South Africa say the latter was a picnic compared with this, this is so vast and so terrible. And no one has done better in it, or made a greater name than Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, so that we Salisbury Plainers may be proud of him. He has a very warm and generous heart: and all here who have come in touch with him are enthusiastic about him.

Really this letter should be to Christie; it is her turn; but I thought you would not like to hear these little chips of gossip at second hand: so she must not mind.

Our wounded bear the most terrible wounds without a cry or a complaint, and nothing has struck me more than the heroic patience of them all. I have myself helped *countless* English soldiers, Protestant as well as Catholic, simply shattered to pieces, who have talked and laughed as if they were in bed with a chilblain. Their heroism is unspeakable.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

November 27, 1914

I HAD a letter from you this morning, dated November 21st, in which you say nought of my return, though Christie, in her letter which reached me the day before yesterday, writes jubilantly of it. *It has been arranged for* and I am expecting the official order to return at any moment now. I shall telegraph from the first English post office I see to tell you I am on English soil: but *must*, I think, stop in London one night, or perhaps two, on official business.

We are all just off to walk to a Cistercian monastery that these officers are very keen to see.

Most of the billy looking letters you sent on prove to be circulars or requests for Christmas orders from my old tradesmen.

Field postman waiting.

15 *Field Ambulance, Expeditionary Force*

I HOPE this particular letter will reach you quicker than usual, not because of its importance, for it has none in particular, but because I am giving it to someone to post in London to-morrow or the day after. It is quite true Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was on leave in England, and all the officers of this Army are getting six days' leave to England. *I am not asking for any* because it is pretty certain that I shall be going home altogether in a week or two.

Mrs. Drummond by no means neglected your letter to her — but worked very hard about it. If I went home I should probably remain two or three nights in London to save another journey up there immediately. I must see the Cardinal and tell him about things here;

I must also see some people at the War Office: and want also to see a dentist, for I have been bothered all the time of the war by a tooth badly broken, with the nerve exposed. Having to stay in London I shall take the opportunity of seeing friends, Lady O'Conor, the Glenconners, etc.

I had a charming letter from Lady Glenconner last night: most cordial and affectionate. They have done their share, too, for the war. Bim, the eldest boy, only seventeen, has joined the Grenadier Guards, and Christopher (only fifteen) is on a man-of-war: Lord Glenconner has equipped, and is bearing the whole expense of, a hospital at Hull for two hundred and fifty patients; he has sent out an armoured train, and a field kitchen for a Scots Regiment, and they have sent all their motors out here and kept none for themselves. She speaks so tenderly about you, and says, "If I had been at Wilsford I should have gone to see her long ago; but since the war began I have not been near it: my time has all been spent working here (in London), or with Christopher at Weymouth, where his ship was till it went to sea." They have Belgian refugees at Wilsford. I think her heart is sore for her boys; they are such children to be fighting for their country. She feels the death of her nephew, Percy Wyndham, very much. I know he was always very much devoted to her.

Lady O'Conor's box, from Fortnum and Mason, duly reached me at "Midden Hall," and I must write and thank her now I know whence it came.

Lady Glenconner sends me warm gloves, a woolly waistcoat, socks, etc., knitted by herself.

She makes me laugh by asking *me* when the war is going to end! I tell her to ask the Prime Minister, as he is her brother-in-law. We are no longer at Midden Hall, but in a convent of Sisters of Charity where the nuns spoil us all.

We have each of us an excellent bed, and I a com-

fortable room all to myself. And this change is all the more apropos as the cold has been bitter.

We are no longer in Belgium, but back in my beloved France, though only two miles from the frontier: about two miles, too, from B. where the lunatic asylum is.

I had a hot bath to-day and boiled some of the dirt off myself — a most luxurious bath in a room with a fire in it! Bert wrote me a charming little letter which arrived last night; mind you say how pleased I was with it. He says, "I was proud to read Sir John French's dispatch with your name in it for bravery on the field: and I hope you will let your humble poor servant to offer you his proud congratulations; and may God bring you soon home to us all, safe and well, who *all* miss you very, very much."

I think more of such simple, kindly congratulations than I can say. The same mail brought me two dear letters from you. You need never fear that in coming home I have sacrificed myself for your sake. I feel I have done my "whack" here; and now I feel in my conscience free to think of home and you. It would be different if we were in the midst of strenuous work.

Of course, when it comes to the point, I shall have regrets: I have lived so long with these good comrades I shall be unable to leave them without feeling sad at the parting and having to leave them out here. But I do feel that the war is in its last phase and please God *all* will be going home soon. It would be impossible to exaggerate the kindness they have shown me, and show me now, when they know I am going. They all say I should go, and might well have gone long ago: but all say how they will miss me. To live together for over three months in the field of war is like nothing else, and one can never forget it. One thought, never uttered, has been common to us all, the longing for home, and for those we left there: God knows how silent it has often made us.

The whole thing has been a dream: and one has felt like a figure in a dream, or a man in a picture, a picture of poignant meaning hardly realized by oneself.

I must stop. God bless you all and may He in His great kindness bring me soon among you all.

Authors' Club, 2 Whitehall Court, S.W.

5.30 P.M., *December* 2, 1914

How are you? I had an excellent breakfast in the train, and read my own study "An Hour of the Day" in the *Month* — and I liked it very much!

I went straight to the Cardinal and found him *most cordial* and nice. He kept me an hour, listening with the keenest interest and appreciation to what I had to tell him of the war. Then it was too late to go to the War Office before going to luncheon at Lady O'Conor's; so I went off to Sussex Gardens at once.

I found Mrs. Wilfrid Ward there, too, up for the day, and two of Lady O'Conor's daughters. They would not let me go till five, and we had a charming long talk about old times and new. Aubrey Herbert and his wife came in, and added to the interest of the party.

Poor Mrs. Ward! Her husband is going for the winter to America to lecture: Herbert going off to India with his regiment — and all his happy Oxford life knocked out of his grasp, where he was so capable of distinction.

At four o'clock the editor of The *Times* wanted me to go and see him: but I am going to-morrow at four instead.

I hurried back here to write this little letter to you lest I should miss the country post. Lady O'Conor's last word was, "Mind you congratulate dear Mrs. Brent from me, and say how much I liked getting her letters (I shall never write like that if I am ever eighty-five) and how glad I am to hear she is getting quite well again."

Authors' Club, 2 Whitehall Court, S.W

December 3, 1914

I HAVE been dashing about all day.

1. To the War Office, where one had to wait ages before seeing anyone.

2. To Vandyck to be photographed: he kept me an hour trying all sorts of positions.

3. To see the Cardinal again at Archbishop's House by appointment.

4. To get luncheon.

5. To see the Editor of the *Times*, by appointment, in the far wilds of the City.

6. Back to the far west to see Bimbo Tennant — who was in his bath, just come off parade, etc. — he came down to the hall in his dressing-gown and we had a long chat there: he is not a bit the Guardsman, but just the same delightful boy as ever.

I gave him a German bayonet and he was delighted with it.

Lady Glenconner telegraphed from Wilsford to ask me to move to their house, but I told Bimbo I was going down to Winterbourne to-morrow and should not leave my present quarters for the one night. I am just off to see Mrs. Drummond by appointment.

To-morrow I have to go and face two more photographers, and see the Cardinal again. I hope to catch the 3.30 and to reach Salisbury at 5: which would bring me to Winterbourne at 5.30 about.

The weather is excellent here.

Authors' Club, 2 Whitehall Court, S.W.

Monday

MY guests here were Lady Glenconner and her son Bimbo, now a Guardsman: (of seventeen) and Lady

O'Conor and her daughter Fearga. Lady Glenconner begged me to come there to dine and sleep to meet Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whom I have always wanted to know; he is an admirer of my books and I am always hearing about him from the Glenconners.

So I shall sleep up here, at the Glenconners, to-night and go down to-morrow morning, reaching home at 1.30: so they had better have luncheon at 1.30 or 1.45.

II

British Expeditionary Force

Saturday, February 13, 1915

I CAN'T write at all a long letter this morning, as I have not yet reported myself to the General here, and must do so; but I want to have a little letter in my pocket to post at Headquarters, so I must write before going out.

I arrived here at 7.30 last night. The journey was very comfortable, and I was glad to come on at once. They begged me to understand there was no hurry and that I need only come on when it suited me. But when I'm going anywhere I like to get to my journey's end as soon as possible.

As I write, every time I lift my head there is the sea (dark and grey to-day), the coast line of white cliffs, ships passing up and down channel, going to England and coming from it — I delight in it. If only you can make yourself content without me for a bit, I shall *really enjoy* this place for whatever time I have to stay here. Do think how different this is from my former going away — then it was to share in all the unknown dangers of the campaign, and its hardships. Here we are as safe as you are on Salisbury Plain, and I am simply in *luxury*. I shall write a good bit here, and that will pass the time away.

Saturday Evening, February 13, 1915

I WROTE to you this morning and took the letter up to the Base Commandant to post. I wonder how long it will take to reach you, several days I fear; for I expect, though we are within two hours of England, that our

letters go back to Rouen, which takes one day, then they go down to Havre, and thence to London to the War Office.

I found them very civil at the Base Commandant's Office, and they lent me a motor to go round and see the various troops this afternoon, directly after luncheon — it really was civil, as they only have two.

Now I will go back a bit: at Rouen I went to see the Cathedral, the Palais de Justice, the very famous Church of St. Ouen, and the Church of St. Maclou. They are all quite glorious; in the Cathedral I saw the tombs of some of our ancestors, the Dukes of Normandy, including Rollo; and thought how Jack Whittaker would have adored them.

The principal streets of Rouen are fine, modernized, and full of smart shops: the side-streets very curly and picturesque — those old houses in the picture over your bedroom chimney-piece are in one of them. I walked about a good deal, but did not feel in the lionising humour a bit; and I was really glad to get into the train with my book and opportunity to rest and be without bothers. You have *no idea* of the enormous number of officials I have had to see since leaving home — *all* strangers, to whom I had to explain who I was and what I was come for, etc.: *most* tedious. I think that is nearly finished for the present. Now to bring my letter on *here* again:

I walked to the Base Commandant's this morning: it is perhaps a mile away, just at the other end of the place: in front of this hotel there is a wide stretch of smooth grass, about three hundred yards broad, and over a mile long: along the outer edge runs a paved esplanade very pleasant to walk on, and beyond that the shingles and the sea.

I told you it was grey and glowering this morning: but just as I went out the sun appeared, and it has been a very bright, gusty day, the sea all covered with white horses. I had to go right to the end of the "plage":

at the end, on a steep cliff, is the old castle: up a hill to the left the Commandant's Headquarters.

Well, in the car I drove far out into the country, and saw six different lots of troops (but the whole garrison of English is only twelve hundred, and I don't think there are a hundred Catholics: whereas at Tidworth, etc., there are three thousand). I saw the few there were, spoke to them a sort of little sermon, and they were immensely nice, so glad to see me, and so gentle, loving, and respectful: the first priest they had spoken to for three months. I am going out to give some of them a service to-morrow night.

I came in just now, had tea, and am writing this. I must say I like my quarters, but I can't look at that sea without wanting to jump over it. England is *not* in sight, but very nearly.

Monday evening, February 15, 1915

How I wonder how you are! Since the letter you wrote on the very day I left, and which I received in London on Wednesday last (the tenth) I have not heard; and, of course, I could not hear. When letters do begin to come I shall be curious to see how long they take; probably nearly as long as from the front (though if this were peace-time you would get a letter from Dieppe the morning after it was posted).

Dieppe is quite a fascinating little place; the two churches (fourteenth century) *most* beautiful, outside and in.

Saturday afternoon was sunny and bright. That night a very strong gale came on, and in the morning I saw a very wild sea, with huge waves, from my window. This is a rough attempt at the sort of thing one sees from it: Away to the left (west) a high coast of tall white cliffs and headlands; in front the flat "plage and digue," and to the right the harbour and lighthouse, etc. Thence at twelve each day the boat goes to England,

and I send my love by it each time, though it doesn't know anything about it.

Yesterday morning I said Mass at St. Remy, one of the two churches; at six in the evening I motored to St. Aubyn and held a little, very informal service for the Catholics there — only about sixteen of them.

I have my own little table in one of the big windows of the dining-room, in full view of the sea. The food is excellent. I wonder what sort of food Mrs.—— is giving *you*. And very much I wonder whether Ver got his extension of leave, and whether he has any likelihood of a new staff appointment.

You have probably by now sent for the Atlas and looked up Dieppe on it: if so you will realise that here we are nearly as far from the fighting as you are. This afternoon I have been visiting the hospital — only six Catholics in it, no wounded, only sick — influenza, colds, etc. It all seems so odd after the front.

One of the patients I sat talking to was a young Mr. ——, son of an Am ican Admiral; he has enlisted in our army: quite a g ntleman, and pleasant, but with the most appalling stan ner I ever heard.

I shall go one of these days to Arques: it is quite near, and the ruined castle was the cradle of the Drews; there Drogo was born, his father William being Comte d'Arques.

If you were ten years younger I should just tell you to come over here: but you could not stand the journey, and especially the sea-passage, which is rather rough and bad, the boats being very small and *rolly*. So I hope you have not had any such idea in your mind, and the boat starts from Folkestone, a very long journey by rail from Salisbury.

Now I will stop.

February 16, 1915

I HAVE just got back from Arques; the castle is really enormously interesting, and I can't tell you how lovely

the situation is — a terrible climb up to it, but the view when you get up truly splendid. The castle was a very important fortress, and would interest *any*body: but it certainly is *more* interesting to us, as it was the home in childhood of Drogo, whose father Guillaume, Comte d'Arques, built it. You know he was uncle to William the Conqueror, brother of William's father, Robert the Devil, and himself son of Duke Richard II of Normandy. William the Conqueror, being illegitimate, his uncle, the other William, Count of Arques, thought he had more right to the Norman crown and fought for it, but lost. Afterwards the two Williams made friends, and the Count of Arques sent his sons Walter and Drogo to England with their cousin.

Richard Cœur de Lion owned the castle, as King Stephen had done; and there King John held captive his niece Eleanor of Brittany, and carried her off thence to another prison at Cardiff.

All through the Middle Ages the castle was important and was constantly undergoing sieges, etc.

I did not expect to find a place nearly so beautiful, nor with such extensive and fine ruins; I thoroughly enjoyed my pilgrimage there.

The village church, far beneath the feet of the castle, is very beautiful, but of a date long subsequent to our family connection with the place.

It has been an exquisite day, very warm and sunny, and an amazing contrast to the day before yesterday. The sea is smooth and creamy, and there are no big waves breaking along the shore.

February 17, 1915

This will be a very short and dull letter: to-day — Ash Wednesday — has been another day of wild rain and wind, and I have been indoors in my comfortable room a good deal of it.

I went out early to say Mass at St. Jacques, the finest of the two very fine churches here. There are really more than two, but the others are quite modern and quite uninteresting.

There is a small party of English naval officers in this hotel on what is called naval transport duty: and I talk a good lot to them. The senior of them is called Captain Benwell, a name which at once reminded me of the broken-hearted Captain Benwell in Jane Austen's "Persuasion," whose broken heart Miss Louisa Musgrove mended up by tumbling down the steps of the Cobb at Lyme Regis.

The Lieutenant is called B., and he has a very fine eye: only one fine one, large and brown and liquid; he showed great taste in the purchase of it. The other (a very poor match) was provided by nature, and is small, of a muddy colour, and looks much more glassy than the one which really is glass. He manages to be nice-looking, and I believe some one will fall in love with his younger eye.

The third is called —, and he is in an awful fright of being thought Irish, whereas, he carefully explains, his family is a London family. Captain Benwell is very nice, pleasant and cordial. He knows Malta, Plymouth, and Portsmouth and some of the people we knew.

We are all wondering whether the Germans will really do, or try to do anything, to-morrow, the 18th.

I wish to goodness they would bring their fleet out and smack at us; it would do something to end the war.

People went to-day to see off the "Sussex," the packet that runs to England. It leaves here at midday, and it ought to come back to-morrow, but of course it *may* be prevented. No letters have come yet, but I begin now to expect them every day: I am keen to know how you are. You must keep well and in good spirits: at all events you may feel sure I am comfortable and safe.

It is so odd, after the front, to be splendidly housed,

with excellent beds, food, and attendance, and as much hot water as one wants — and also shops to buy anything one wants.

I purposely brought no English books with me, as I want to read only French here and so practice and improve myself.

February 19, 1915

I DID not write last night because the letter I had written the night before had not left for England: the mail-packet for England did not sail, nor (I believe) has it sailed to-day. The above address does not mean that I am in a different place: I am in the same comfortable quarters; but it is the correct military address: and you had better use it. But so far no letters have arrived, from you or anyone, except one from Sir Ian Hamilton written on the tenth. Of course the German blockade of England began yesterday, and perhaps letters will arrive rather irregularly. The only sign of it one sees here is a patrol of torpedo-destroyers guarding the approaches to this place.

You may see in the papers of to-day the account of a merchant ship towed in here yesterday (I saw it brought in) that had been torpedoed by the Germans. It did not happen in this region, but thirty miles away in the channel. No lives were lost.

The concierge has just come into my room and brought me a bundle of letters. Two very cheery and bright ones from you, dated Sunday and Monday. No other letters, though you mention a packet of twenty-three: no doubt they'll turn up. I'm so glad to see what satisfaction it gives you my being in such comfortable and safe quarters — poor Alice must be envious. She, I see by Christie's letter, is by this time (6.15 P.M. Friday) back with you. I *am* so glad of that, for your sake and her mother's (and poor Togo's); I think she will like the

quietness and rest of our house after the noise and rush of London.

I feel ever so much cheerier since hearing from you: I could not help being anxious till I did hear, and evidently you are putting a good heart on it. Really there is so *much* to be thankful for. Here one feels so near home, and all the discomforts and strain of the front are absent.

February 20, 1915

This morning I received about thirty letters, twenty-three in one envelope, and I have also received four parcels: (1) *Universes*; (2) shirts; (3) boots; (4) some shirts, socks, etc., for soldiers.

The esplanade on the sea front is a mile long and is pleasant walking, always dry and easy to the feet. I have now three pairs of good boots besides the big gum-boots. I was never so well provided for for years.

I received a very cordial letter from Gater and another from Winifred; the latter tells me poor Sir Edmund Antrobus is dead. I expect my poor friend Lady A. will feel it very much, though not in the same way she did her boy's being killed. I gather from Winifred's letter that you *have* the bath-chair, which I am glad of, as now you can get out whenever a fine day comes.

I am the only chaplain of any denomination who has been mentioned *twice* in dispatches during this war; at least I am told so.

I must stop now to answer some of those other letters.

February 21, 1915

When I gave you the number of our army post office in my last letter I left out S. So I hasten to put it right.

I am in jumping spirits, having just seen last Thursday's paper (February 18th) and seen my name in the second dispatch, as well as in Sir John French's first

dispatch. It is something to get *one* mention; but to be mentioned in both his dispatches is tremendous luck.

It is a perfect day here and the sea looks lovely under the bright sunshine.

This morning I had a special Mass for the English troops (eleven of them!) — in a side chapel of St. Jacques. It was rather funny, for while I was trying to make them hear me preaching in a very low voice (not to disturb the congregation in the body of the church) they were trying *not* to hear a French priest with a voice like a bull bellowing a sermon about twenty feet away.

The boat went again last night, and is going to-night, so I suppose our mails will become regular again.

February 23, 1915

It is awfully cold here to-day, though very sunny and bright: a fierce north wind, and of course we stare due north over the sea. It looks very pretty; sapphire, emerald, amethyst, all mixed, and laced with strings of pearls.

There is hardly anyone in this hotel now. The naval people stay on, almost all the rest are gone. Did you see the picture of me in the *Daily Mail* of yesterday? I wonder how they got hold of that old portrait when there are so many good ones?

To-morrow Alice comes back to you: poor dear, she must wish *her* soldier was safe and comfortable at Dieppe: all the same *this* soldier would rather be at the real front. However, I heard from my late C. O. to-day, and he evidently thinks there would be very little for me to do up there at present.

I must go to the hospital and shut this up.

Wednesday, February 24, 1915

It is 4.30 P.M. and I have just had tea and a letter from you. It had no date, but it enclosed a cutting

from the *Globe* alluding to my second mention in dispatches.

I am so thankful and glad that you are well, and that you are happy at my being in good and safe quarters.

It is a very cold day here, with a sleety rain and a bitter northeast wind: the sea outside looks very angry and grim, like our foes who maraud upon it.

It is bad news the Russians having taken such a knock, and lost so terrible a number of prisoners. But you may be sure it will buck them up and make them more than ever determined to get their own back.

I always wondered what those Belgian youths were doing at Porton; it explains why they hid away when I went to see them, and only sent out the *old* one to talk to me.

There is a huge barrack here devoted entirely to Belgian troops, and full of young fellows drilling and training for the front: they look very business-like and capable.

When I wrote to you on Friday I thought Alice was going down to you that day, and pictured her just arrived: now I am doing the same thing over again. I am sure she will congratulate you on my second "mention." It is particularly comfortable coming just at the time of my return to France, for reasons I need not explain.

When I sit up in my bed in the morning on awaking, and look out across the sea I think of you in *your* bed looking down this way: we are pretty nearly face to face.

We have no *boss* officers here; the garrison so far is too unimportant; a Colonel or Lieutenant-Colonel is the highest. I should think the English soldiers find it very dull: but I fancy they are rather hard-worked.

The parish priest made me a little visit of ceremony yesterday afternoon, a very nice, stout old party, full of civility and good-will. He seemed to think my room very chic, but I planted him by the window, where a good strong draught blew in his ear, and he moderated his transports.

I must bring this very dull letter to an end, with all the usual messages to Christie, Alice, Togo, Bert, Mary, etc.

I have to write to poor Lady Antrobus.

February 26, 1915

Please don't address Army *Pay* Office, as you did your last, for the nearest Army Pay Office is at Abbeville forty or fifty miles away, and they might send all your letters there.

I wish my letters didn't reach you, as they seem to, in batches: I write every day and should like you to get a letter every day.

It has been *horribly* cold here, but now has got milder again; the cold gets hold of my liver and makes me seedy. Of course this situation, exposed to north, east, and west winds *is* very cold; and often it is quite mild in the streets of the town behind, and bitter here. Still it is *much* the nicest situation, and I don't suppose it will always be cold.

After luncheon yesterday I went for a walk along the shore: very pretty, but very hard going: the "plage" ends where the casino shows in your big card; then it becomes at once quite a desolate coast, with very high, precipitous cliffs. At the foot of them there is no sand, only coarse shingle, very hard to walk on, and further out a sort of floor of prickly rock full of pools. There I found a lot of wounded French soldiers, convalescents, busily picking mussles — millions of them cover the rocks — and I asked if they cooked them, and how; but they promptly proceeded to show me how they ate them raw: limpets, also.

One of the lads told me that in addition to his wound he had just had typhoid. "You'll have it again in about half an hour," I reassuringly told him.

There are no shells along this shore, but I think one could pick up hundreds of pebbles that would polish well.

About a mile away I saw a family — perhaps two — living in a cave — they live there always and must often be shut in by the tide. The door of the rock house is about forty feet above the base of the cliff. I am trying hard to get off my chest an immense number of letters owing to people: I write over twenty a day, but there seem heaps still to get through. So I am only going to make this one to you a short one.

February 27, 1915

I FOUND to-day in the town a card of the cave-dwellers along the cliffs, and so I send it to you. Also some of the old castle that I happened to visit on duty to-day, in search of Catholic soldiers: it is at present occupied by about sixty English soldiers, and very rough their quarters are: old mediæval rooms tumbling to decay, with rotten floors, and crumbling roofs, no beds, and no straw, only a blanket or two on the damp and dirty floors: and no fires! However, they were very cheery, and did not grumble an atom. They showed me all over the place, quite proud of an English officer for a visitor. I never saw a more ghostly place: and *how* cold it must be these tearing nights of frost, sleet, wind, and fog, perched up on that cliff exposed to every gale that blows. The sixty soldiers in it are like half a dozen peas in a barn.

Isn't the east end view of St. Jacques lovely? and the interior, too?

You must understand that the cave-dwelling illustrated is high up the face of the cliff. A weird enough place to live with the ocean thundering at your feet in high tide, and quite cut off from all other human intercourse at times.

It is very late and I must go to dinner.

February 28, 1915

This is Sunday, and yesterday I got your letter written on *Thursday:* not bad to get it the day but one after it was posted, was it? and with it came the parcel containing the school magazines, and the printed slips from Arrowsmith.

I went this morning to say Mass at seven, at St. Aubyn, one of the outlying places where there are a few soldiers about eight kilometers from here. I only have about eighteen or twenty-six there, so my congregation was not large, but it was very attentive and devout. At ten I said another Mass in St. Jacques.

They have given me for my Mass a side chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Good Help, rather large and very interesting; from the groined roof hang quaint models of ships, put up as *ex voto* offerings from sailors or fishermen, in thanksgiving for escape from shipwreck. Dieppe has always been a great sea-place, and in the old days suffered continually from English descents upon it. The old castle was built to defend it against us: and now the streets are pervaded by English soldiers who come as friends.

The Belgian soldiers training here are a very nice set of men: with such good, honest, pure-minded faces: and alas! such boys. They drill and march splendidly.

The long line of hotels are *all* hospitals except this one, full of wounded French soldiers: and it is *they* who are to be seen limping along on the "plage." And, alas, you hardly see a woman (not one well-dressed one) who is not in mourning. Of course they are not all widows, but Frenchwomen put on such tons of crape that they all look like it.

The chamber-maid who does my room, "Jeanne," has her husband fighting at the front, in the Vosges district where the fighting is so bitter, hand to hand, and incessant. She is a very good, nice girl, and I made her

very happy yesterday by sending off to her husband a little parcel containing two shirts and a pair of knitted socks.

The interpreter at the Base office here is a French private soldier, also a Jesuit priest, called Père Constant: a really nice young fellow. Of course he is lucky to have the job, but all the same I feel sorry for him. His only companions all day are the other (English) private soldiers, and they just call him "Constant," and treat him as they treat the soldiers who are chauffeurs, etc. He tells me that thirty Jesuit priests have been killed at the front — not chaplains, you know, but fighting as soldiers.

There is a nice little Belgian lady in this hotel; she came here seventeen days ago to meet her husband who was expecting seven days' leave from the front. To-day he arrived and she presented him to me with great pride: he is an officer, about twenty-six, and very smart and also very nice. It does one good to see the little wife's happiness.

The sunset just now behind those western cliffs was quite lovely. A very angry sea in front, dark olive-green, with black patches, and wonderful clear yellow patches; the headlands, and behind, saffron and primrose sky showing through rags of fierce cloud.

The tide, as you say, would be dangerous under those cliffs, but it does not *seem* to go out, or come in much, because the shore is really steep, and the water is very deep quite close: big ships come quite close in.

The mail goes to England regularly every night, but it is escorted by French torpedo-destroyers.

The naval officers here seem to think that since the blockade began we have not been really losing any more ships than were being destroyed by the Germans before the blockade started, while we have been sinking many more of their submarines.

The worst of this hotel is, it is very dear: but the

others *in* the town are very fifth rate French country-town inns, and I don't feel inclined to try them. I have *looked* at some, but they were so grubby, so noisy, and so *un-sanitatious* that I decided not to venture on one.

Most of the English officers are at one by the railway-station: and I thought it quite beastly and if the Germans did send a little Zeppelin, of course they would make for the railway-station and try to drop their bombs there! There is really nothing to tempt the enemy here: there is only one barrack and that quite away from the town inland.

I must stop now and write some other letters.

March 1, 1915

I HAD a long and pleasant letter from Lady Glenconner to-day: I did not confess to you that when I went to luncheon with her in London her house was a hospital: Bimbo, the eldest boy, the Guardsman, in bed with influenza; David, the third boy, with diphtheria. However, both were doing very well; and now Bimbo has jaundice, and lies in bed, she says, with long hands that look like rare yellow orchids. Poor Sir Edmund Antrobus died, it seems, after an operation at Amesbury. Christopher, Lady Glenconner's second boy, the Naval one, is she thinks (but does not know) helping to take the Dardanelles. She herself is a prey to neuralgia after all her nursing, and lies with a hot-water bottle on the nape of her neck: but apologises for mentioning it, saying: "I ought to imitate the admirable Lady Sarah Bunbury, who at the end of a long and interesting letter about politics, etc., tells Susan Fox-Strangways, in an excellently restricted postscript, 'I have lost the sight of one eye.'" She also apologises for a little ignorance of hers about a minute matter and says: "Did I ever tell you of Sir Henry Newbolt's friend, who *dreamt* such a good word? He dreamt he was arguing against a wrong-

headed man and kept saying, 'I tell you it's more than ignorance, it's pignorance.'" And she hopes I'll forgive her pignorance.

You will say I am mean to fill up my letter out of another person's letter. But there is no news.

We had another terrific gale last night, and indeed it is going on still — enormous waves breaking right over the light-house.

I have heard quite often lately from Madame Clary and she always sends really loving messages to you. I think she is *more* cheerful since her total blindness than she used to be.

Now good-bye.

I don't apologise for dull letters, because I know no one here, and don't want to know anyone, and there is nothing to tell in a daily letter.

Tuesday, March 2, 1915

I SHALL have to write rather a short letter if I finish it to-night, for it is late, and just on dinner-time. I have been out with the Senior Naval Officer here, to see that ship the "Dinorah" which I told you the Germans torpedoed on the 18th, and which I saw towed in here that same day.

I went out at 6.30 this morning and said Mass for Pierce, and shall do so to-morrow, too. At eleven I took my letter to the Base, and found yours of the 28th, with the little cutting about Kyffin Salter's will. Fancy his leaving over £100,000! Most of it the Langford money he inherited from our old friend.

The post also brought me a letter from Lady Antrobus.

Well, at five I went to look at the torpedoed "Dinorah," originally an Austrian ship, taken by the French and used by the Government for conveying oats, hay, and trench-timbers to Dunkirk for the troops. The hole is very big, about nine feet high and nine long *showing*,

and more of it under the very low-tide water-level in the dock. We examined it outside, then climbed down to examine it from within. The torpedo struck just amidship and the torn-off plate is in a coal-bunker, separate compartment from the rest of the ship, otherwise she would have gone straight to the bottom. We went up and talked to the captain and engineer; I doing interpreter: such nice men, simple, plain, honest fellows, with no *buck* or swash-bucklering about them. They said the noise, when the torpedo struck the ship, was horrible: she, poor thing, shivered and leapt up in the air, then came down, and they no doubt thought she was going down to the bottom of the sea. It was 2 A.M. and every light was extinguished by the explosion; how terrible that darkness must have been! They showed us a bit of the torpedo itself, that the force of the explosion had flung up onto the roof of the engine-house — a piece about two feet long and eighteen inches wide, weighing a huge amount.

It was a most interesting visit: my Naval Officer had never seen a torpedoed ship any more than I had. After all the damage done is only slight and can soon be repaired: no doubt the Germans flatter themselves the ship and her crew are lying far beneath the waves.

I must stop. It is not nearly so cold and the gale has subsided.

March 4, 1915

YESTERDAY, Wednesday, I received your letter written on Monday: it seems the regular thing now to get letters from England the day but one after they're written.

Yesterday I also received enclosed letter from Dora Severin, now Dora Hardy, an orphan niece of Mrs. Bland's, whom that most generous and self-sacrificing (and very poor) woman adopted and brought up. As a tiny child you may remember her at Ellesmere one summer when all the Blands took lodgings there.

Our cold weather has quite gone, and we have muggy but much warmer weather, that in Malta would certainly be called a *sirocco*, which I confess I like better. I can sit in my room in comfort without freezing.

Good-bye for to-day.

March 4, 1915

I THINK I have even less than usual to make a letter out of to-night. I walked to the Base office after Mass and got your letter of Tuesday — the day before yesterday — and a lot of others. Also the *Month* for March: did you get a copy, too?

By same post came a perfectly charming letter from Sir Charles Fergusson, who commanded my Division at the beginning of the war, and was very kind to me, and who now commands a whole Army Corps. He had been reading the thing of mine in the February *Month*, and immediately wrote home for the January and all successive numbers.

He begs me to go and stay with him at the Headquarters of the Army Corps, which of course, I can't.

Also I heard from Lady O'Conor, who is sending me out things — I really need none; but it is very nice of her.

The head priest at St. Jacques is a queer old boy, and rather amusing. I said Mass for the Dead to-day, and told him it was for all those killed in the war. "All those killed among the Allies, you mean," he said. "Oh, no! for the dead of all armies," I told him. He made a very ugly face and said: "I won't do that. The Bon Dieu must look after the Germans Himself, for me." I laughed and said: "Perhaps the Bon Dieu will say that He has no time, then, to look after you." Whereupon the sacristan giggled and he went away shaking his old head.

There are two nice Misses La Primaudaye nursing in

a French hospital here: nieces of Mr. La Primaudaye at Malta, and cousins of your beloved Margaret Pollen.

I have been answering letters for four and a half hours in a row, so I shall make this a short one.

To-day has been mild and windless, with a thick sea mist, very wetting, but it is only on the "front;" in the town there's none.

I give the little chap who serves my Mass a few pennies every day — he is a rather sad-looking (sailor's) orphan. I asked him to-day if he bought cakes or sweets with his pennies (all cakes and sweets are very dear here). "*Je n'en achète rien*," he answered, "*je les économise*." It sounds so much finer than: "I save them up."

Now to dinner.

Friday, March 5, 1915

How do you do?

It has been very mild, almost stuffy, here for the last day or two, sometimes quite windless; but to-day, especially to-night, with a strong, not cold, westerly gale. A very thin rain or sea-fog (only it isn't a fog on land) all day, thickening towards evening.

Saturday

I only got so far, and was interrupted last night. To-day is a most wild day, and the sea outside a turmoil of waves, rain, spray, spin-drift, and howling wind: inside it is very cosey, not cold a bit.

The ships can't get in to port at certain states of tide, and eighteen have just accumulated outside, with torpedo destroyers fussing round them in case of a submarine turning up!

I have been watching them (very glad I was not on board any of them, they jumped and rolled so horribly); they have just been able to get into the port, and it was very pleasant to see them slip in one by one.

I got a lot of letters to-day, including two of yours of the third and fourth.

Your letters are *anything* but dull, always most cheery and pleasant reading: none more interesting to me. I also got a long and very pleasant letter from Lord Malise Graham, A. D. C., to my other friend Sir Charles Fergusson, whom I used often to mention to you in the early days of the war. When Sir Charles went home he had to return to his battery; now Sir Charles is commanding a whole Army corps he has come back to him. He says "I had to go and shoot Germans for two and a half months, but the only thing I *know* I shot was a Flemish cow."

Send a post-card to Ryders, Seedsmen, St. Albans, and ask them to send *you* a catalogue and one to me here, Army post office, S. 8., B. E. F. and between us we will choose seeds.

I must dry up because I have to go and hear confessions at St. Jacques.

Sunday, March 7, 1915

I WAS delighted to get your letter to-day, and to know you were taking good care of your little cough; don't let it grow a big one. Bed is the best place for coughs.

I had two letters to-day from people who recognise I did them good turns: Major —— who has just got the D. S. O., and Martin, who has been mentioned in dispatches. Both say they owe it to my asking it for them, as I did. Martin writes a long letter and ends up: "It was a great privilege being with you and I shall always think you one of the finest men in the world."!!

These kindly letters do make up for the malice and jealousy of some other people.

Sir Charles Fergusson sends another letter, full of genuine affection and respect, and I never knew him

till I served under him. He commanded my Division then, now he has succeeded Sir Horace in command of a whole Army Corps, Sir H. being in command of the 2d Army. He says, "Will you think it very impertinent of me if I ask you to go and see my wife whenever you are in London again? I have talked to her hundreds of times about you, and our children would simply adore you." Lady Alice Fergusson has her share of anxiety from the war: her husband at the front, and two brothers: (a third brother already killed there).

I tell you all this not out of vanity, but to console you with the idea that there are plenty whose opinion is worth something who think thus of your son out here.

"The men," says Major Ormsby, "never forget you, or cease talking of you. 'There was nobody like Monsignor,' they say, 'he *was* a gentleman.'"

You aren't the only person who thought it odd that with the double mention in dispatches there was no "recognition."

I left here to-day at 6.30 A.M. to go and say Mass for the few sheep I have in the wilderness at St. Aubyn, and then said Mass at St. Jacques at ten. I had quite a long talk with the two Misses La Primaudaye — they made my congregation thirteen. They said: "What *are* you here for? Someone jealous somewhere, I suppose?"

Our soldiers are playing football outside on the grass between my window and the sea. I love to see them enjoying themselves. The Jesuit soldier, Father Constant, is coming to dine with me here to-night; he is a very nice man.

Monday Evening, March 8, 1915

It is nearly dinner-time, and I have only just come in from a rather long visit to the hospital; not because I have many sick there, for I only have two, but because, after talking to each of them a good while, just as I was

coming away the matron asked me if I would mind going in to chat with a sick officer who would be very glad to have me; so I stayed on another hour with him. He proved to be nice. His name is Captain Lyttelton, and he was out in Malta when we were, with the Northumberland Fusilier Militia; do you remember them? Poor young Lord Encombe who died was in them, so were the Roddams (a deaf lady), and the Jervoises and a lot of others whom we knew slightly or well.

My Jesuit priest-soldier who dined with me last night enjoyed his evening, I think.

On Saturday I meant to tell you about the weekly market here, which is rather quaint. The actual market-place by St. Jacques is not nearly large enough, and for a quarter of a mile along the principal street, the market-women plant themselves on the pavement, and set out their goods to tempt the public.

They are almost all uncommonly plain, and not very un-English looking: there are some dark and handsome Normans, but in general they are fairish, with eyes of no particular colour, and features of no particular shape — quite unlike the Latin type, French or Italian. They are, like all French people, frugal and careful, content to make a little money slowly, but using everything and wasting nothing. Some had a chicken to sell; one had a turkey. Some had even two chickens: hundreds had eggs, a good lot of eggs, and there were Belgian non-commissioned officers with big baskets buying hundreds of eggs for barracks. But some had only very small affairs — half a dozen bunches of snowdrops, a mere handful of salad, enough white "honesty" seed-pods to fill a small vase, three or four cheeses at twopence each; they despise nothing. Imagine a Wiltshire villager walking to Salisbury to sell a handful of "honesty" pods, or a handful of radishes!

It was quaint and interesting, and I think they themselves think the market very serious business.

The few hens, and the one turkey sat very composedly by their owners' sides, waiting to be bought.

Very few of the women wear hats, in fact scarcely any; the younger ones are bareheaded (even in church) the elder wear very unbecoming little black knitted capes with a sort of cap forming part of it, and drawn over the head. I must say the capes and caps look grubby, and are not picturesque or flattering to a plain, drab face. One or two wear regular bonnets (very stale and greasy) always greasy and always black, of the build I call lodging-house woman, or char-woman — generally made of *wool:* and probably the ancestral home of a humble but contented population.

If you sit close to these elderly females in church you are conscious of a sourish, frowsy atmosphere.

In all the streets (we here, of course, are not in a street, but on the "plage") there are runnels of water beside the pavements. At intervals are sort of taps out of which the water, always running (and quite good and clean) comes. But those runnels are really the drains. *Every*-thing out of the houses is emptied into them in the early morning, and as I go to Mass at 6.30 I see *awful* things!

I must say that the sea-front is the place to live on. All the same, Dieppe is not smelly: the water runs so incessantly that all atrocities are rapidly carried off into the *avant-port* or *arrière-port.* All the same I shouldn't care to eat mussels here (nor oysters, either).

To-day at luncheon there were mussels: yesterday, enormous whelks. I tackled neither, nor do I think any of us do. I saw a man go the length of tearing a whelk out of its shell, but it looked so horrible that he got no further.

It is time to stop and go to dinner. Tell me if you can easily read my letters written on both sides of this very thin, but excellent paper. If not I will only use one side of it, and I think one is only supposed to write on one side of it.

Wednesday Evening, March 10, 1915

This is the third letter I have written to you to-day: first, a very short one asking for a new stock, which I took to the Base office with a lot of other letters, and found yours in which you were making yourself miserable because of some idea that I was up at the front, or might be.

So I sent you a second letter to assure you I am still, and am likely to remain here, where I have been all along, until I go home: if I do go home.

And now I am writing my regular evening letter to post to-morrow. I hope you will be fit again before this reaches you.

I promise you not to apply for any change from this place, though my being here is ridiculous, and also horribly expensive. At the front one's personal expenses were almost nothing — £1 for messing about once in three weeks! Here they rush me over £4 a week. Of course if they wrote and said there was a chaplain *needed* in some more active place and would I go, I should say "yes."

Yesterday I was late coming in because I had been out into the country. Up at the front I nursed a young French cavalry soldier (among many) whom our men picked up badly wounded and brought in. He was enormously grateful and often wrote to me, and often wrote to his people about me: they are Norman peasants living at a hamlet called Etran near here. As soon as he knew where I was he begged me to go and see them, which I did. It seems he had sent them a little portrait of me cut out of a newspaper, and as soon as I arrived they called out, "It's Charles's priest!"

They were nice, very simple country-folk: but respectable and well-to-do. I told them how wonderfully sweet and patient, gentle and grateful, Charles had been when suffering with a bad shell-wound in his hip,

and they sat round listening with a most delightful, simple pride.

The mother is a stout old party, with a large Norman face, the daughter rather like her brother, but less good-looking, and the two little boys listened with all their eyes while I expatiated on their young uncle's bravery and goodness.

I have now been out to another place in the country: Varengeville. The Commanding Officer there is a Colonel Acland, a very nice man to whom I had written to arrange about my going out to give services for his twelve men.

He very civilly came to see me, and we motored out there, and then I motored back.

He is a brother of Sir William Acland, an Admiral we used to know at Plymouth, and he and Sir William married sisters, both daughters of W. H. Smith and Lady Hambleden, Rebecca Power's sister. So we had great talks. I have promised to go to luncheon with him, and go and see a wonderful old house called the Manoir d'Argo near there.

I send you the German *Hymn of Hate!* Ask Alice to try the music of it. It was in the *Weekly Dispatch* wrapped round a book. I did not buy the book, but one of the French waiters here gave it me for a present.

Thursday, March 11, 1915

I RECEIVED a nice letter from Alice this morning in which she mentions that you had re-appeared, or were re-appearing in the drawing-room, and were really better, which it cheered me very much to hear. I asked them at the Army Post Office what the rates are for postage to us, and they say:

Up to quarter pound for letters, etc. (anything), 1d.
Over quarter pound and up to one pound, 4d.
Over one pound and up to two pounds, 8d.

But even if letters *are* overweight they have never sur-

charged, and (never from you) I have received plenty that were a good bit over-weight.

To-day is mild and warm, rather misty: and I must say I prefer it to the tearing windy days; because the wind is always cold.

Both yesterday and to-day I have been overtaken in the street by the Base Commandant, who joined on and walked and *talked:* he does the latter with great vigour. He is clever, but full of theories. He has all sorts of theories about races (I don't mean the Derby or the Grand National, but peoples) and he loves to sit on their backs (the theories' backs) and ride them.

Unfortunately I don't think history quite confirms them. He is serenely aware that the French, Spaniards, Romans, Greeks, Assyrians, etc., all had their day, and passed it: but he cannot perceive that what happened to *them* might some day happen to the British . . . because we are Northerns. Northern races, he seems to think, are immortal: I hope so.

However, he is not quite sure whether the British or the Russians are to boss the world after the war. I think he finds me an agreeable listener, for I have had three goes of his theories in twenty-four hours: anyway, he's uncommonly civil and I would rather listen to theories, for a change, than unending war-talk.

Besides the two Church of England Army chaplains here now, there's a regular Church of England chaplain for the Dieppe English Colony. He is a German, and the French, of course, hate him, and his wife is an Irish Catholic: which the members of his congregation highly disapprove. The senior Church of England Military chaplain lives in this hotel, and we sit together at meals. He is a very friendly and pleasant person, and we get on very well. He can't take his eyes off a very remarkable-looking young French lady who sits at the next table (with her husband). She dresses beautifully and would not be bad-looking, only she whitewashes her face and

paints her lips bright scarlet; her paint makes her truly alarming to look at, and I avoid an acquaintance. My brother chaplain is always watching to see if the scarlet comes off her lips onto her napkin.

You never saw anybody so thin as this lady: Mrs. H. C. is fat and podgy in comparison with her. She and her husband look very well-bred and are very quiet.

You see what stuff I have to fill my letters with; this place is not remarkable for incident, and I carefully avoid getting to know the English colony. In places like Boulogne, Dieppe, etc., there is always an English colony, always furiously gossipy and quarrelsome, and the only way to be safe is to keep out of their clutches altogether. I fancy the English who choose to *live* in small French towns near England have little histories very often, and are apt to be queerish: but of course I don't know.

So far as I can judge there is no French aristocracy here; you hardly ever meet anyone in the streets who looks like a real lady, and the few gentlemen are officers who don't belong to the place. In fact Dieppe is very expensive and I think French aristocrats would not choose it to live in, for it is dull and they would get very little for their money. Almost next door there is one very big private house, and the princely coronet and arms over the door made me rather curious to know who could live there. When the Base Commandant overtook me just now he had been to call there: they are Roumanians, a Prince and Princess Sburza. Why on earth should a Roumanian Prince build himself a huge house at Dieppe?

Now I must bring this long but very dull letter to an end. Up at the front (and at home, as you know) I tried wearing very thick knitted woollen socks, and they were always damp, no matter how often I dried them. Now I've gone back to the sort I always used to wear, thin ones, and my feet are ten times warmer.

Friday Evening, March 12, 1915

I HAVE not changed my address! A. P. O. is only the recognised contraction for "Army Post Office" as B. E. F. is for British Expeditionary Force. You can use the contraction or the full as you like — the only thing that matters is the letter S and the number 8.

Our postal service is very well managed, and is not carried out by ordinary soldiers, but by trained post office reservists serving out here in that way.

I got your dear letter of Wednesday to-day, Friday; it is such a blessing getting one's letters so soon.

After luncheon I went for a walk to a place called Puys, along the coast eastwards. I had to cross the harbour and then got on to the fields at the top of the cliffs: you need not fear my walking too near the edge of them, for I am *frightened of them*; I keep well away, and *could* not go and look over. It doesn't make me giddy, but it gives me a sort of horror. To tell the truth, I can't think of anything else that does frighten me. The shells, etc., up at the front, never did in the least: but I shrink away with a most singular dread from the edge of cliffs, etc.

The coast is rather fine; the cliffs enormously high; along the shore an odd floor of rock.

Puys isn't much to see when you get there. I hoped to find a fishing village, but found a valley running up from the shore (a chine really) full of empty villas and an enormous empty hotel.

However, it was a walk.

I saw only two people all the way after leaving the town: two English soldiers, walking much too near the edge of the cliff. I warned them not to, and told them how rotten and crumbly the chalk is; when I came back I found them both lying fast asleep about three feet from the edge of a precipice three or four hundred feet high.

I am nearly sure that old people *cannot* get spotted fever, but you are right to keep suspects away.

Ryder's catalogue has not turned up yet.

I must trot off to dinner.

Sunday, March 14, 1915

I AM sending you by this same post, but separately, a Dieppe pâté: which I hope will arrive in good time and in good condition. I think them uncommonly good.

Yesterday and to-day have been heavenly days, warm, soft, bland, with a bright sun and a windless sea. On the latter a warm mist, but the boats near land casting the most extraordinary reflections of themselves in the unrippled water. The cliffs close at hand stand out white and gleaming, but their line curves away into the pearly haze out of sight.

At this moment I feel tired: at six I arose and went to Varengeville to say Mass, preach, etc., for Colonel Acland's lot; then back to say Mass, preach, etc., at St. Jacques.

I have just had my breakfast, and am sitting at my big window, both leaves of it wide open. The French soldiers (convalescents from wounds) are playing football on the green outside, the bright sun bringing into full glory their exquisite red legs!

I am cracked about that colour and want to have a dressing gown made of it. *Please tell me how many yards of cloth* would be needed to make me a dressing gown: putting the breadth at a metre — forty inches. Don't forget to answer this!

This paper is not so good a quality as the last — (it's rather like what one covers jam-pots with). Can you easily read if I write on both sides?

I got a very nice letter this morning from a Mrs. Brent, very cheerful, and laughing at herself for thinking her son had been wafted up country somewhere.

I must tell you they've made a new order now (and

issued it to every officer so that none can say he "didn't know"): I enclose it. You will see we are not to put *even* the military address at the head of our letters; we may still embody it in the text, thus A. P. O., S. 8., B. E. F. (You shouldn't put Expeditionary Force *and* B. E. F. as one stands for the other, but whichever you find least trouble.)

Of course this new order sounds awful tosh, but we have to obey it; so you see I put only the date at the top of this letter.

I heard from you both yesterday and to-day: yesterday I took my letters and read them on the strand in the sun. The place I walked to on Friday afternoon, Puys, was a favourite retreat of Alexandre Dumas the elder, and of a number of French men of letters, of his time: I daresay it *was* a fishing-village when they began to go there, but their favour made it fashionable. Alexandre Dumas died there. The late Lord Salisbury went there every summer, and his villa, Châlet Cecil, is to the fore still.

I'm glad you enjoyed my account of market-day here; I only wish I could draw.

Normans aren't a bit like real French people: they have tow-coloured hair, and mud-coloured faces, and boiled-looking eyes. They can't bear the English or the Belgians — who united to bombard the town in 1694 and *utterly destroyed it*, leaving it a mere heap of ruins — and now the streets are full of Belgian and English soldiers!

I received a most *affectionate* letter to-day from my late Commanding Officer, Colonel Slayter. . . . The Presbyterian principal chaplain has been going the rounds and visited 15 Field Ambulance. . . .

I must stop for to-day.

March 16, 1915

The stock arrived to-day and fits beautifully — ever so many thanks for it. It was not in the least crushed

on the way. You put 8d on it and it weighed much under one pound, so it should only have had 4d. You waste your stamps every day in writing to me.

It is very heavy, muggy weather and I can scarcely keep my eyes open, so I shall not attempt a real letter now; but will take this to the post (it has to be there by 6 P.M.) for to-night's boat, then come back and write you a decent letter.

There is no *Sunday* boat to England now, nor from it, so you can get no letter from me on Tuesdays now, nor I from you on Mondays.

I must go off to the post before I fall fast asleep.

Ever so many thanks for the stock.

St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1915

I HAD another nice letter from you to-day, very cheering and bright: also I received *from you* Ryder's catalogue, which I will go through and make out an order, which I will send him through you, so that you and I may not order the same things twice over. As to *vegetable* seeds, we usually get them at the post office, as we do seed potatoes, and Bert had better get them there this time. They come from a Society called "One and All" and are very good.

I wore your new stock to-day and thank you afresh for it. I received *after* Mass a box of shamrock and a large box of good cigarettes, a present from Cork: unfortunately, they were addressed thus: "No. 8 Post Office, Expeditionary Force" and had been to No. 8 P. O., up at the front; No. 8 Cavalry Post Office; Headquarters; and finally here.

The sender is a Mrs. Scriven (Helma Scriven), a well-to-do Irish *farmer in her own right:* (Mr. S. is gone to Abraham's bosom) whom I never saw, but I knew two *very* nice nephews of hers in the Irish Rifles at Tidworth, John and Denis Lucy: John (only quite a lad, but very

charming and refined) is now a Sergeant; Denis, unfortunately, wounded and a prisoner since last September.

Wasn't it nice of her to think of sending me the cigarettes? It's not as if her boys were here and I could do anything for them.

The Scarlet Lady, as I called her, has gone away long ago. Her name was Madame B.

I walked to Puys along the cliffs again after luncheon to-day: at the top of the cliffs are quite flat fields.

On Sunday night I went out to dinner, invited by an elderly French widow who seems to feed priests. There were six of them! We had quite a delicious dinner, thoroughly French, very light and agreeable: and I liked my old hostess.

I had a very cheery letter from Colin Davidson from the front, where he is very happy. He spoke much of you and hoped you were well and cheerful. This morning at 3 A.M. I heard four explosions out at sea and said: "There the Germans are, torpedoing some ship: I suppose they'll send our letters from home to the bottom." But it was only *fog-bombs*, let off to signal the way in to the mail-boat through a thick mist.

I have acquired a most painful habit of saying awkward things. The other night I was introduced to a magnificent old French Staff Officer as bald as a coot: and he said, "I have admired your white hair so much." "Oh yes, I've plenty of *them*," I replied cheerfully. "And I none at all," he remarked, rather grimly.

And I was sitting talking to four naval officers who have all been *here* since the beginning of the war. They spoke of a young Army Service Corps officer here, and I asked what his work was. "Oh, seeing hay unloaded from England," they told me. Then I said, tactfully, "A nice safe way of getting the war medal." You should have seen those four faces. Of course they'll all get the medal, too: I believe they thought I said it on purpose. Mr. B's glass eye glared in its socket.

Now I must take this letter off to the post. They have to be there by six or they lose the night boat.

With best love to Christie, Alice, Togo, etc.

Thursday Afternoon, March 18, 1915

I ENCLOSE two more letters for you to read — they need neither be returned or kept.

One is from George ——. His wife was the lady who said to Lady Auckland, "Lady Auckland, *why* do you say 'Not at Home' to people when they can *see* you are in?" and to whom Lady A. replied: "Mrs. ——— ——, *why* do you paint your face when people can *see* that it is painted?"

We have another character in this hotel now: the French Commandant of the place, an ancient Colonel — the gentleman to whom I made the happy remark about my abundant white hair. He is splendidly uniformed, and our fellows call him the Chocolate Soldier. I never met such a talker; he grabs you and keeps you an hour or two while he gabbles. Last night he kept me in the hall till everybody else was in bed.

I saw the hall-porter cleaning his valises this morning and observed demurely, "A charming person!"

"He talk mosh too mosh," said the concierge in English, "nobody don't want to pay no spies while he talk — everything told for nothing."

He is a very flamboyant Catholic, and is supposed to have been a martyr to his religion: but I should say his tongue had something to do with it. However, he is all bows and amiability.

After luncheon I walked to Puys again — because it is the walk by which you can get at once into the country. I am sure that the sea has washed away miles of those cliffs, and I suppose that once Hampshire and Sussex were all in one piece with this land. You can see valleys that have evidently lost half of themselves in the sea,

quite abruptly ending, not verging down to the shore: and you can see other pieces of cliff getting ready to collapse into the sea.

Puys itself is to me the most dismal sort of place — a crowd of châlets and villas, all shut, not *one* house open: and no small houses or cottages: not one house that is or ever was anybody's *home;* houses built simply as pleasure resorts for a few summer weeks. Not one house that ever grew there out of anyone's necessity, as farms grow, and cottages.

It is a coldish, snappy day, with a raw mist, no sun, and a nipping wind — as every day has been for a fortnight except Sunday and Saturday, which were enchanting.

Apropos of the Army Post Office address, I ought to tell you that supposing by any chance (which I pray may not be) you were seriously ill, you could *telegraph* to me at the hotel addressing thus: — Monsignor Bickerstaffe, Grand Hotel, Dieppe.

And I should get the telegram quite soon.

One of our military guests here had a mother ill and she telegraphed and he got the wire very soon and got leave to go over by that night's packet.

Now I must trot off to the post and also to the hospital where I have already been this morning after Mass.

With best love to Christie and Alice.

Friday, March 19, 1915

I AM very glad the pâté arrived all right and that you found it good. The *charcutier*, the man who sells all those sorts of good things to eat, is a great institution in France.

I send you to-day a *pâté tube de soldat:* it does not mean a pâté made of German soldiers slain in battle — or subsequently for the table, but is intended as a little present to send to a soldier.

I have sent lots of French soldiers things of the kind. The point for the soldier is that it needs no tin-opener, and that the part not used at first opening doesn't get spoiled or dirtied, nor does it grease other things. The stuff inside is very good.

It is *bitterly* cold here to-day, and I am revelling in a fire, the first I have seen since I left England. I have to write something to-night, and last night I found I was cold so that I could not. So when to-day came colder than yesterday I told them I must have a fire, or change to a room with central heating. Now I have a lovely wood fire. . . .

This is a scrubby little letter, but I *must* write this evening, and first there is the journey to the post with this: It is quite a mile away!

Monday, March 22, 1915

I AM writing this from Eu, where I am for a little outing from Dieppe with Captain Benwell, the Naval Commandant. We had luncheon at twelve, caught the one o'clock train and came to Tréport. . . . Captain Benwell had to come and inspect the place. It is a pretty journey from Dieppe, and Tréport is pretty too. The old church stands in a fine, bold position on a rock over the little port, and inside it is very beautiful: outside quaint and picturesque. We had tea at Tréport, and walked to Eu; about three miles along a pretty road. . . . The church is very fine indeed, and the château is close to it; the back of it looks on the church, the principal façade into the great park. It is a royal residence; it was the special *family* residence of Louis Philippe, and it was there that he entertained Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort. The present owner and inhabitant is the Comte d'Eu, grandson of Louis Philippe; and the Comtesse d'Eu is grand-daughter of the Emperor of Brazil. I expect you remember another

grandson of the Emperor of Brazil, Prince Louis of Saxe-Coburg, who came to see us at Plymouth and told you that he was used to speaking-trumpets because his grandmother the Empress of Brazil used one.

We are going to dine in this inn, and then catch the train which leaves for Dieppe at eight-thirty and arrives there about ten. I have made Captain Benwell go out for a walk while I write this. I must say I enjoy the little change and outing.

Here's Captain Benwell, and I must stop.

Wednesday, March 24, 1915

I AM so glad the hats arrived safe, and gave such satisfaction; and particularly glad to think that you had your share of them. Alice tells me you made a most engaging summer bonnet out of the two Tuscan straws: I am sure they would not lose their *smartness* in your hands.

I went to a *glover's* for the suède gloves, not to a draper's, and sent you the pair of black ones by this morning's boat. I thought the thread pair might do (to match the Tuscan straw!) for sitting in the garden, etc. They are not *common*, though cheap.

Yesterday I went to Arques again, and walked up the beautiful wooded valley *behind* the castle, away from the broad main valley in which the church and village are: in the Middle Ages it was not a village but a "bourg" more important by far than Dieppe, which was only a fishing village.

I took a paper with me, and read it sitting by the roadside, alone with the woods and the throstles that were tuning their spring songs. Alas! the first thing I saw in the paper was that poor little McCurry, the youngest officer in our Field Ambulance, was killed on the fifteenth. It made me very, very sad. He was such a bright, boyish lad, and he was absolutely devoted to me. Before

the war he was one of Carson's gun-runners, and of course I used to chaff him for making friends with a terrible Popish priest: but the truth was he hadn't an ounce of prejudice or bigotry in his whole body: he only went in for gun-running for *fun*, just as he came out to the war for fun, and this is the end of his young and hopeful life.

I was really ill one day, and only one, and he was kinder and more tender to me than any woman could have been; indeed, though barely twenty-one, not twenty-one then, he was a very clever doctor.

The night I left he came to my room and said: "Monsignor, I had to come and see you alone to say good-bye. Of course, I'm only a kid, and I don't know how to talk, and I'm not clever or well-read; but none of them have been so fond of you as I am; do let me come and see you in England: will you? You have taught me to look at life in a different way, and shown me nobler things to live for. And, O dear Monsignor, I do love you so much."

I cannot tell you how it horrified me, reading of his being killed. We called him our baby, and death and he seemed to have nothing to say to each other. I came home very sadly: and to-day I said Mass for his brave and simple soul.

I bought more cards for you in the village at Arques, though I daresay you have them nearly all.

You cannot think how many lovely views of the old ruined castle there are as one walks up that valley. If I could have drawn I should have made a dozen pictures; in some places it was through the naked boughs of tall trees that one saw the stern grey fortress, and the afternoon yellow light fell on it and them. And the exquisite leafless woods are all spread with a golden carpet of daffodils.

I'm glad Father M. came, and that you and he are burying your very uncalled-for hatchet. . . .

Now I must stop.

Tell Alice and Christie about poor little *McChutney*, as we called him; I have often made them scream with laughter over him.

March 25, 1915

"I HOPE you are quite well, as this leaves me at present," and I really don't know what else to say!

It has been raining all day to-day and yesterday, and the sea looks very damp and cold. But this is almost the first rain there has been in all the weeks I have been here.

Yesterday after luncheon the French Commandant (the brilliantly uniformed old Hussar, with Eton-blue jacket covered with embroidery and astrachan fur, and geranium-coloured legs) to whom I made my brilliant remark about plenty of hair, told me that he had seventy or eighty German prisoners arriving — in fact just arrived. I said, "Now, mon Colonel, don't be unkind to them." He seemed to think it very funny, and got everyone round to tell them how Monsignor had forbidden him to maltreat the Boches. After dinner he told me he had seen them.

"Mind," said I, "you have promised to be nice to them."

He skipped with amusement. "You shall come to see them." (That was just what I wanted.) "You shall give them your benediction."

It turned out, too, that one of them had been servant to a friend of his, and they had recognised each other at once.

I got a card yesterday from the little wife of the Belgian officer who was here, to tell me she had got as far as Holland on her way home.

I hate telling you sad things, but I am going to tell you one: yesterday I heard that one of the French

soldiers, convalescent after being wounded, in one of the hotel-hospices close to, had received the order to go back to the fighting line. Probably he had been here since September. The poor lad hanged himself. Isn't it horrible to think, not only of the act, but of the unspeakable anguish of mind that ended in it?

My poor McCurry killed, nobly, in the way of duty, all his hopeful youth finished, that was sad enough; but how much more horrible to think of this ignoble way of exit, in evasion of duty, of one whose youth was hopeless. But it was not, I am sure, mere cowardice: it was simply a breaking-point of endurance, reached after long horrors of anticipation. To go *back* to that awful fighting, remembering it, and saved from it by a terrible wound — the thought of it so infinitely more unbearable to a lonely, morbid mind than the first going to it.

For that poor soul, too, I said Mass to-day: do say a prayer for him.

There is another little French dog in this hotel who wants to adopt me, but I won't be adopted; I was too sad when I lost my other little friend. One of the landlord's many daughters saw me talking to him and said in English, "We will give him you a present. 'E no-one's dog. 'E 'ave no 'ouse. 'E come from no place. 'E arrive, no one sending 'im no invitation. If you 'ave 'im, you will be the welcome."

But I pictured how welcome "E" would be to Togo, and what fine ructions there would be if I took "im" home.

Poor little thing: he sits and looks at me and trembles all over, and wags, and comes forward, and stops, and shivers: he has a ripe experience of being snubbed.

I promised you I had nothing to say and I have kept my word!

With best love to Christie and Alice and a lump of sugar to Togo.

March 26, 1915

I HAVE just got ready for the post (to-morrow morning's) another pâté for you, and put in five tiny cream-cheeses. I hope the little packet will reach you safe and soon. After luncheon I again went to Puys, my favourite walk, as I told you, because one gets away from the town quickest that way.

But this time I went by the shore, which takes much longer: it is horribly rough to the feet, and ruinous to boots; all the way there is a flat floor of sharp rock, and at the base of the cliffs a belt of deep shingles of flint. Near the town there is a regular colony of cave-dwellers, and they all look miserably poor, starved, and pale.

The rock floor is of a white stone, chalk I suppose, but hardened by the daily weight of the mass of tide upon it, and it is pitted with innumerable holes, out of which the waves have banged the flints: these holes are sharp and disagreeable to walk on. Nearer the water the flat floor of rock is *carpeted* with millions of tiny mussels equally unpleasant to walk upon — as they may think, too.

I found a lonely French soldier surveying the waves, and we sat on a rock and talked. He comes from the far south, and talked very odd French. I consoled him with a franc and a bundle of cigarettes.

It was a lovely day, though cold, and the sea and coast line looked exquisite. In front, after yesterday's wind and rain, the water was Mississippi-colour, brownish, muddy, but laced with snowy lines; beyond these came bands of meadow green, and slaty-blue, then wonderful primrose patches, and then, under the horizon, great expanses of sapphire-blue. The coast line is really glorious, the cliffs enormous, curving away into the clear haze where only their tops showed like veils of yellow cloud.

. . . The huge building is the hotel full of wounded soldiers now. The odd terrace-line at the top of the picture is half a Roman camp, the other half long ago fallen into the sea where all the rest will follow. At that point the cliff must be quite five hundred feet high.

I walked back by the fields at the top of the cliffs, very glad to change the shingle and shag for the smooth grass: it took about one quarter of the time.

I always turn in to the little votive chapel to pray for Ver and all my dear comrades out at the front. I answered Dora Hardy's letter to-day. . . .

I must stop: with best love to Christie and Alice—and the Admiral.

Saturday, March 27, 1915

THERE is now no mail to England from here on Sundays, so that this cannot start on its way till midday on Monday: but to-morrow evening I shall be out in the country, holding service for a few sheep in the wilderness, so I write now: not that I have anything to say! . . . .

I confess my writing becomes worse; I can't approve of my way of crossing my final t's, but I can't break myself of it.

I shall continue to wear my hair like a "nut" till you see it; then, if you are irreconcilable, I will alter it. It makes me feel as if I had walked out of a wood!

It is cold to-day, and I'm revelling in a wood-fire, which makes my room have a delightful smell, like the smell Captain Cust's study used to have in winter when I was a child. I always think that smell exactly the proper thing for a room, and now it carries me back much more than forty-six years and gives me a double pleasure.

I am going to send you, when I've finished it, a book I delight in, called "Rural Rides." It is by that eccentric genius called William Cobbett, who wrote a wonder-

ful, popular, vulgar, but very clever History of the Protestant Reformation in England. He was a Protestant himself, but he thought Henry VIII, Elizabeth and James I atrocities, and showed up their dealings with their luckless subjects as to religion in a fiery fashion that no Catholic writer could or ever did approach.

. . . He was Hampshire born, and the "Rides" are full of the most fascinating descriptions of our part of England—Wiltshire—and the adjoining parts of Hants, Berks, Gloucester, etc. When I send you the book you are not to toss it away and say, "It's all politics and swedes and mangold-wurzels," for the bumble-puppy politics don't matter sixpence and the farming is all mixed up with exquisite appreciation of the country, scenery, woods, trees, etc. He was a frantic radical in his day, but it was when half the English poor were wretched, and no social reform had begun. . . .

I'm so glad Father Cashman came: I like him *very* much and I think his brogue is part of him, and suits him: I shouldn't like him not to have it.

Christie says your bonnet is lovely: one of these days I'll get you a new veil here to go with it. . . .

The bay at Tréport is very wide; under the cliffs at one end is Tréport; under the cliffs at the other end is another place called Mers.

The censor looked rather glum when I took him five or six envelopes all addressed to one person: but I didn't care, as they went off all right.

One day a soldier wrote twenty-eight *sheets* to his wife, on purpose to give the censor trouble. The censor sent for him and said: "You may, of course, write to your wife; but you may not compose *albums*."

No letter of mine has been opened since I have been here, except one to a French soldier, and that was my fault, because I forgot to frank it with my name outside. As this censor doesn't know French I expect it bothered him.

French people's politeness is rather funny: one day a French soldier asked me, after a long talk, if *I was French* (a delicate way of hinting at my excellent French). "Come," I said, "do let us be sensible. You ask me if I am French. How long did it take you to know very well that I am English? Tell the truth."

"*Au premier mot, Monsieur,*" he answered, thus adjured!

As a matter of fact one gets little practice during the war: I have been in France many months, and I don't suppose that I have talked French, or had any chance of talking it, for anything like twenty-four hours, if all the times were added together.

Still, I had nearly forgotten it when I came out in August, and now I know as much as I ever did know, which wasn't much.

What a dull letter! I'd better go to dinner.

Give my best love to Christie and thank her for her letter, also to Alice and the Admiral. You see, I'm getting economical and only give you one sheet with the *chiffre* on it. Notepaper, etc., is very dear here.

The dentifrice quite cured the afflicted part!

March 29, 1915

VERY many thanks indeed for the second stock, which arrived safely, and without any crushing or spoiling, with the other things. The parcels reached this place on Saturday night, and were delivered yesterday.

On Sundays, after their Mass, the Belgian troops training here have a parade on the grass just outside my window, and I watched them with great interest, then went out and watched them march away to their barracks. All very young, from eighteen to twenty-one, but really wonderfully business-like: and a very good, honest set of faces, like fair English faces; only here and there a sly or mean-looking countenance.

Poor things! I do hope the nasty old war will not last long enough to swallow them all up.

This morning I met on the "plage" that Belgian lady who was staying here when I first came, with her husband and a friend or sister, and we had a long talk. (I do not mean the little officer's wife.) They have taken a villa and are going to stop here till the war ends.

She is *really* nice, a lady of good birth and position, and very like an Englishwoman of the best class. She says that at their château in Belgium four hundred and fifty Germans are billeted.

I told her Dieppe bored me, but she said, "Your mother must be glad to know you are so safe and so comfortable." I know it is so; and when one thinks how many of one's comrades are in such hourly danger, one ought to be truly thankful. I know you are.

The son of the landlord of this hotel has to go on Friday, a very nice lad of eighteen: quite a gentleman, but very gentle and I think *timid;* he goes to Belfort, a great frontier-town that I remember visiting long ago — in 1879, I think.

Yesterday I met in the street that little soldier whom I found so eagerly gathering mussels on the rocks when I first came here. He came up and said: "Monsieur, I go to-morrow; first home to see my people in the south, then back to the front." He looked a little blue about it. He also is a little, delicate-looking thing, with a face like a very innocent child. I've often seen him playing football out on the grass in front, skipping about like a young gazelle. I asked him one day what his trade was when he was not soldiering and he said "a hatter"; and, as he looks a little cracked, I'm sure it's true.

Last night I motored out to St. Aubyn to give a very unconventional service to some stray sheep there, and the air was like frozen daggers. However, I came back to a roaring wood-fire.

Now I'm going to look up some other stray sheep. And I must shorten this letter: which is just as well, as there is nothing to tell you.

So good-night.

March 30, 1915

I RECEIVED a charming letter from Miss Stewart to-day and three parcels of things, for myself and for the men — chocolate, cigarettes, mittens, etc. She *is* a good and nice little woman.

Also I received the rochet, which I must thank you for sewing the lace onto. It came all right, not the least squashed or tumbled. Really our military post is very good and much quicker than the civil post. . . .

The bitter cold winds continue, and *my fire continues!* No fear of my putting on thin clothes yet.

I enclose a nice letter I received from George Parker. I'm sure he is a nice man. But I laughed at his saying, "You young men."

Also I enclose a letter from Sir Charles Fergusson, not that it contains anything special, but I want you to see what a nice and good man he is.

I am not going to try and write a letter myself now, because I feel dull and headachy (not neuralgia, or at all bad) and I must go out and get a puff of air: unfortunately, the puffs are so strong and cold!

Wednesday, March 31, 1915

I HAVEN'T much more to make a letter out of to-night than I had yesterday, but the headache is quite gone, the day is bright and lovely, and I feel very cheerful.

Last night I had to go to bed, and there my headache left me in peace. (I don't mean that other nights I do *not* go to bed, but that last night I retreated thither directly after dinner.)

I'm so glad the gloves were what you wanted. . . . As to the Falaises of Varengeville, they are about three miles from here, to the left — to the west. Aren't they fine? I walked in that direction after luncheon to-day, along the strand, and "E" as Alice called the little French dog, bore me company. . . .

I found three French soldiers devouring mussels by the sea, and talked to them for ever so long. They had all been wounded, two of them in the thigh. "And where," I asked the third, "were *you* wounded?" "Near Ypres," he said. "Yes; but in what part of your body?" "Well, Monsieur," he replied discreetly, "I'm sitting on it." I gave them chocolate to eat instead of the mussels, and cigarettes and mittens.

They were very nice fellows and talked so simply and cheerfully about their rough life at the front.

I'm sorry Ver is in hospital, but I think the rest will be good for him.

I had a letter from Mr. Gater to-day (and one from you). He tells me of a string of accidents and disasters.

I will write soon to Mrs. G., but it is really Winifred I owe a letter to.

The sea outside looks heavenly and the sun is just dipping his extremely red nose in it. About sunset there always comes on a peculiar and lovely pearly light, everything takes on the same colour, the old castle, the cliffs, the *air:* only the sea is dark and strong in colour: and the Western Sea is *not*, but *shrimpy*-coloured, with long bars of cinnamon, primrose, and white.

I like walking along the shore, but it is ruinous to one's boots.

Thank you, dear, for your prayers for that poor lad who hanged himself. I do not fear God's mercy for him; only I think, as you do, of the long and lonely anguish of that despair that led to his doing it, and it seems so horrible. If only one could have known! One friendly human voice might have made such a difference.

One reason why I so often go along the cliffs to Puys is that the first time I overtook a young Gascon — once wounded, cured, and sent back to the front; then ill of typhoid and sent here. I warned him not to walk at all near the edge because of the crumbly soil, and hollow overhanging summits, and he said, "What an easy place *pour se suicider*." And I stuck to him, and only left him when he met comrades going home and went with them. I don't think he meant anything: but I wondered; I've often met him since, but never out of the town, and he always seems very cheery.

Now I must go off to post.

With best love to Christie and Alice.

Thursday, April 1, 1915

I HAVE just come back from the post, whither, having no orderly, I have to go and fetch my letters in the morning, as well as to post them in the evening. It is 11.15 A.M., and at 12 I have to go and dine with the "archpriest" of St. Jacques.

I found at the post your letter telling of the safe arrival of the pâté and the tiny cream cheeses. You must understand that the pâtés were not both the same. The tube seems to have lasted wonderfully: was its inside good? I know the pâtés in the "tureens" but not the tubes.

It is quite a heavenly day to-day: mild, creamy air, exquisite sunlight, and a delightful air of hope and resurrection over the country.

From the windows there seems to be no sea: but a sky that comes up to the shore, and up in it spirits of good ships glorified, bound on no tedious voyages of profit, but cruising for sheer love and memory.

But when you go out and stand by it, there the sea is, pulsing, not moving, waveless, not even lapping on the strand, but *lying* against it as lake-water lies against its banks.

There were seventeen craft awaiting high-tide to go up behind the town into the hidden harbours, one of them a three-masted schooner. About fifty yards from the beach there was a diver, with snow-white breast and coal-black back, both gleaming in the sun, standing up in the water, splashing, swishing, fooling, just for fun and pleasure.

There I sat and read your letter. It does cheer me so to see you cheerful. I must say this is a lovely place, and though dull, I enjoy it.

You are not to imagine that the fields on the way to Puys slope down to the top of the cliffs; at the top of them they are as flat as pancakes. No fear of slipping down.

5 P.M.

Now I am finishing my letter up in my own room.

The midday dinner-party at the archpriest's was much more agreeable than I anticipated. There were six of us, and the dinner not at all stodgy. No meat, but various dishes of eggs, fish, vegetables, etc.: and the company very pleasant.

The archpriest is just my age, and very glad not to be younger, as he is safe from being snapped up for a soldier. His curate, of whom I told you, a little Redemptorist monk of forty-four years old, was suddenly called off yesterday. I can't picture him in uniform, he looked such a typical little monk.

The archpriest is a clever old boy, with a sharp and rather stinging wit, but not malicious.

They were all complimenting me on the devotion and attention of my soldiers at Mass. One of them laughed, and said, "Perhaps they do not listen so attentively to everybody: they tell me Monsignor is worth listening to." But I assured them, what is true, that it made no difference; English soldiers would *always* listen with the same simple and devout attention to *any* priest.

By the same post with your letter came *another* from ——, and that one I think need not be answered. She loves inditing portentous epistles full of mysteries and shockdoms.

I came back to the hotel after luncheon, and picked up *Lady A.*, the French dog, with whom I went for another walk along the shore towards Varengeville, *i.e.*, the direction opposite to Puys.

This morning one could not have gone that way, the tide was up to the foot of the cliffs. As I went to the archpriest's house in the town I passed along the *basins*, or at least the *pré-port* . . . the water was up to within eighteen inches of the brim, and it looked very nice. There were some little English ships, and I chaffed the sailors, and asked if I might not step on board and be a stowaway.

. . . The Casino at the other end of the "plage" is now a hospital, as are all the hotels, except this, upon the sea-front.

I believe Dieppe was a beautiful mediæval town till 1694, when we English with the Dutch (it was under William of Orange) bombarded it and utterly destroyed two thousand houses. The royal architect under Louis XIV laid out a new town, with all the houses much alike — and not one with a staircase!

I am sending you the "Rural Rides": don't begin at the beginning, but at page 323. You will like the Wiltshire descriptions. Never mind the roaring politics!

April 2, 1915

I HAVE written such a lot of letters, and it is so late that I must make this a short one, which is all the easier that I have nothing to tell you!

This morning I received your letter promising to read "Rural Rides" which I had just posted to you. I hope

you won't say, "How *can* he like this book, with its endless tirades against the clergy, National Debt, etc.!"

I like it because of its intense feeling for rural England, and also for its sympathy with the English peasant, who often in those days had to feed himself, his wife and children on five or six shillings a week, pay rent, buy fuel, clothes, foot-wear, etc. Cobbett's line is simply this, "Much wants to be done: nothing can be done except by Parliament: and what hope is there of *such* a Parliament?"

Old Sarum, with *no* inhabitants, returned two Members to Parliament, and hundreds of members represented other "boroughs," with three, four, or a dozen inhabitants, who perhaps had no votes. The Members were simply sent up by the man who owned the land.

His politics are often sheer rubbish: but they are generally a sort of sympathy for helpless people, gone mad. I believe the parish clergy he abuses were then mainly an inferior and selfish set: it was long before the Oxford movement had regenerated them.

His whole argument is this, "Here is a starving people and here is corn enough to feed a nation twenty-five times more numerous: this *must* be wrong."

After it I am trying to read again "Tom Brown at Oxford," which I read last forty-five years ago and liked very much: I find it rather tedious now.

"Lady A." is sitting by my fire, whence she comes on her hind legs begging, not for sugar, but to be taken out for a walk. So I shall take her to the post.

She is much nicer than her dowager namesake, and far more amusing company. But unlike the dowager she has a tendency to produce puppies, and did so two or three months ago. However, they are all drowned, and she has forgotten the episode.

I hope it will be fine enough for you to wear the new bonnet on Easter Sunday. I shall wear the new stock.

I must be off to post.

Easter Sunday, 1915

I HAVE just written to Pierce and to Harold Skyrme, who wrote me a nice letter from Devonport. When I was a small boy I used sometimes, writing from school, to ask for a few stamps: would you send me a few now, not many, say six penny ones and six halfpenny? When one writes to any place beyond England, like New Zealand or America, one has to put on a penny stamp.

If any of these cards about dead priests come, be sure to send them on at once, as I am bound to say Mass for the departed soul.

Yesterday it rained hard all day, and so it did all this morning, but stopped about one, so the men got their football outside on the grass here, this afternoon. I had a good many men at Mass to-day, more than last Sunday and there were a good many then. I said two Masses, both in St. Jacques: a parish Mass at eight, and then the soldiers' Mass at ten.

The hotel is rather full now, but no one who looks very interesting. The Scarlet Lady and her husband have turned up again: and there is another painted lady, an Anglo-Indian, between fifty and sixty, with a face like an angry bird. Captain Benwell tells me he had a passage of arms with her (I don't mean embraces). He has a caustic tongue, and I fancy he told her this was no time or place for such tourings. However, she launches hungry smiles at him. There is also a terrible, though not bad-looking, young Jew, with a wife: both English.

I managed yesterday and to-day to take "Lady A." for a brief walk: but she is just as unreasonable as Togo and comes up here at bed-time with violent entreaties to be taken for another walk. Captain Benwell tried to take her out this afternoon, but she would not go, and he was rather offended.

Into my last letter I stuck two large pages of natural

history out of the *Field*. I wonder if you said I was crazy? I thought they might interest you.

I heard from my late Commanding Officer to-day: he is, as I knew he would be, very sad about dear little McCurry's death. The poor boy was crazy to get mentioned in despatches.

They have started an English Club here, and as they have not actually *asked* me to join, I shall not. It would bore me stiff.

It is not the principal chaplain's fault I have not gone home, or the Cardinal's: the War Office won't let any of us go home for the present. So you must console yourself with the thought that I am in safe and pleasant quarters, and with the thought that if you were really ill I could get home from this place very quickly. Except on Sundays there's a boat from here every midday and it gets to Folkestone in four hours. For that, if need were, which I trust will not be, you could telegraph direct to me at Grand Hotel, Dieppe. I only tell you this lest you should fear the A. P. O. address would make a delay.

I must stop and get ready for dinner. No fish, thank goodness.

Easter Monday, April 5, 1915

Another day of rain — a very dirty day at sea, I expect, to judge from the part one sees from this window. The wet weather spoils a "Kermesse" there was to have been this afternoon at the Casino. A Kermesse is the French form of bazaar, and the proceeds were to go to the Red Cross charities.

Just opposite me, not many hundred yards out from the shore, is a small transport that brought horses, etc., over yesterday and is waiting for dark to run across to England. I should like to be going, too — but not in this weather.

I said Mass for you this morning, as I very often do,

and it was a parish Mass, *i.e.*, said for the convenience of a congregation, and I gave Holy Communion to about three hundred people, including a good many men, and some soldiers — French. The soldiers seemed very devout and nice.

Last night I had a talk with the little French Commandant d'Armes. He loves to buttonhole you, and I should like it very well if he did not talk so very quickly that I find it hard to follow him. He is a handsome little creature, with very bright blue eyes and a bright, not red, complexion. His name is Comte du Manoir: and he is of a very old family in Calvados. He knows the present Comte and Comtesse Clary, but not our old friend. The French *Naval* Commandant, who sits at the same table with him is also very nice, but very English-looking and also very quiet. His name is de Castries (pronounced de Castre), a very famous name, the elder brother Duke de Castries. Comte du Manoir seemed quite impressed at my knowing all about these various people and where their name comes in in history, etc.

He is not a Republican, and wants a monarchy, but doesn't he wish he may get it! I think Europe is much more inclined to get rid of its kings than to set up new ones.

He told me an odd instance of presentiment. In the war of 1870 he was twenty years old, and was on service as an officer; the Duke de Castries (elder brother of the Naval Commandant here) was his comrade, and they slept in the same tent, on the ground. One night de Castries woke him up and said, "Listen, I want to tell you something." "And I," said du Manoir, "want to sleep." "You can sleep: but I am going to be killed; and I wanted to tell you. Now I shall go out and walk!" After walking for a while he came back, lay down and slept till morning. When morning came he was killed. He was the eldest of eighteen brothers and sisters.

There are *five* torpedo-boats and destroyers cruising round the empty transport — in case of submarines I suppose; they look very business-like; I expect they are come to convoy her across the Channel.

Sir Edward Grey's reply to the German message, transmitted through New York, about our "special treatment" of submarine prisoners was very cold and crushing, wasn't it?

"They are being treated with humanity and kindness: but our ships have saved the lives of over a thousand German sailors and naval officers, often at great risk to themselves, and not one English sailor has been saved by the German ships."

Of the priests killed in cold blood by the Germans in Belgium only, over fifty were killed without the least pretence at any trial, even the roughest form of court martial. This is an instance: after a battle three priests went to the German senior officer and asked leave to go out and bring in German wounded. He gave them a pass, and they went. On reaching the place where the wounded were, with three waggons, they showed their pass to the German officer there, and he said, "Fill your waggons then," and they did: as soon as they had told the drivers where to take the waggons the German officer ordered all three priests to be shot, as they were. There was no charge of any sort brought against them.

I see that when the new Belgian Minister to the Holy See had his official reception by the Pope, to present his credentials, his speech was a very strong indictment of the German army of occupation of Belgium; and of course it had been submitted to the Pope beforehand, so that his listening to it at all, and his making no protest, was very significant, in his position as a strict neutral.

I think the Germans have the same disease that afflicts mad dogs.

Nevertheless, I told you several weeks ago that if we accorded any treatment to submarine prisoners meant

to mark them as pirates, *our* officers in Germany would have to pay for it: and you see they declare that it shall be so.

I'm sorry to see young Mapplebeck is now a prisoner in their hands. Do you remember him? A very tall, but very young Flying officer who spent half a Sunday with us when recovering from an aëroplane accident?

I made Captain Benwell laugh by asking him if the Anglo-Indian lady, like an angry, painted old bird, does not glare at the public as if she were saying, "Why don't you propose to me, cuss you?"

I must really stop.

I think you get more talk with me now I'm in France than when I am at home. Don't forget to send that MS. from the Northern Newspaper Syndicate.

As for book catalogues, send me the outside leaves or the addresses of one of each and I will tell them to send me them here direct. As for seeds — if you have ordered those you have marked, it is about all you will need. Order plenty of Kosmos.

Easter Tuesday

JUST a line to show you I am not ill or anything — and then to bed. I am very sleepy and it is late. I spent a long time to-day visiting a French hospital and talking to the poor wounded fellows one by one, and giving them things. When I came in I had to write business letters and now it is late and I must go to bed. I'm quite well and had your letter of Good Friday to-day.

Wednesday, April 7, 1915

I NEARLY put off my letter till too late again: I had written nine or ten others, and was just about to begin yours when the senior R. C. chaplain and his A. D. C., another chaplain, arrived in a motor-car, on a sort of tour of inspection. . . . I nearly did for myself by

forgetting, as it was rather late, to offer them tea. However, I did remember. . . . I told them of my various doings and they seemed to approve. . . .

The photograph is poor, dear, young McCurry. His father sent it with a *most* grateful letter. But I can hardly bear to look at it, and you can keep it for me. Doesn't he look a boy!

There have been three French submarines here to-day and I saw them in the dock: I had never seen any before. Of course I saw them on the surface, and they looked rather like very long torpedo-destroyers.

I told you that I spent yesterday afternoon visiting the wounded French soldiers in one of the hospitals — it is run by English doctors and nurses: and it is where the two Misses La Primaudaye are nursing. The men were very nice, and I was glad to find that they were all keen to get back to their comrades in the fighting line: the poor lad who hanged himself was no specimen of their general feeling. The Misses La P. were rather inclined to lionise me for the benefit of the men, so I told them to be off, and got on much better without them. No soldiers care to be patronized, and told that their visitor is a prelate, etc., and least of all French soldiers; they are so simple and unsnobby themselves. After all, they *are* republicans, and titles and grandeurs are more apt to set their backs up than to impress them: but they do understand kindness and frankness.

The hospital is extremely well managed and the men were uncommonly comfortable.

Monsignor Keatinge gave me the name and address of a first-rate American dentist at Boulogne, who charges officers *nothing*, and, as I ought to have two bad old stumps out, I shall go there some day soon. I can't go there and back in one day, so it is possible if I go at a moment's notice you may be without a letter for a post or two posts. Trains, except to Paris, are so slow here.

I must stop and change for dinner.

Thursday, April 8, 1915

At last the rain has stopped and we have had a fine day, at the cost of a tearing wind that has blown the rain away. After breakfast I went to the post to get my letters, and to post those I wrote last night. I found yours of Easter Monday which I read while waiting for Mr. Hill, who had gone with me: he is the senior Church of England chaplain and a very honest, nice man. We sit at the same table and are excellent friends. But he cannot help talking to every one he sees, and at great length, so it takes a long time to get him down any street, at least any street where there are English people, for he cannot talk French, though he takes regular lessons. His instructress says she longs to shake him, and I bid him beware lest she should marry him, to have the right to do it at her ease.

After luncheon I walked — west, by the shore, and enjoyed it very much. You mustn't imagine it is here a long, dull straight wall of cliffs: they advance and recede and are of very unequal heights, some like huge round towers: according as they are made of pure hardish chalk, or of chalk with deep "faults" of marl in them, for the rains and frosts rot these marl deposits, they fall and leave the chalk standing up like ramparts and turrets.

The high spring tides have left a nice deposit of sand and it was easy and pleasant going.

The sea, very brown in front, but breaking up into cream-white lines of foam, was all sorts of lovely colours besides, Nile-green, meadow green, sapphire blue and pure cobalt: no purples to-day. The sea was very rough and I did not want to be on it.

A good way along the shore I came upon a cave, like a smugglers' cave in a romance, and perhaps used as one once. It had a sort of sloping entrance-hall and one regular room with fireplace carved out of the rock, but

no "troglodytes," no inhabitants. It was, at its lowest point, six or eight feet above the highest shore outside, and ran up to sixteen or twenty feet.

The only sea-creatures I saw were mussels (millions), shrimps (millions), a few star-fishes, and a very few sea-anemones.

I came back by the shore, too, and much more quickly with the strong gale blowing me along. On the grass outside were some French children drilling, and they were very funny and very clever. I stood and watched them; so did a young French private soldier, and we began to talk. He is a gentleman, and was working a sort of ranch of his own in Argentina, when the war broke out, so he came home to fight. We went for a turn and then came back and I gave him tea. That sounds odd to English ears, but it is not so here, where you often see officers (French) walking in the streets with soldiers — because of the army containing men of every class, and perhaps because of the fact that this is a Republic. His father is fighting, and his only brother, too. I found he could talk a little English, but not much: and I also found him a strong monarchist. He liked his tea, and he liked the talk with someone of his own class.

This is St. Albert's Day and the Belgian troops were reviewed on the "plage" at noon; not so interesting as an English review, but also much shorter.

Before that I had taken Hill to examine a curiosity shop, as he hasn't French enough to do it comfortably by himself. I did not buy anything, but I think he wanted to buy everything. However, I wouldn't hear of it!

I'm glad you liked the natural history pages out of the *Field*. I thought them interesting and the illustrations excellent.

Lord Glenconner tells me that his wife's nephew, George Wyndham, has been killed: it is sad and strange too, for poor young Percy Wyndham made him his heir.

Thus Clouds has had four masters in less than four years, old Mr. Percy W., his son Mr. George Wyndham, young Percy, and his cousin George. Lord G. says it is a great shock to Lady Glenconner.

Friday, 5.30 P.M., *April* 9, 1915

All Alice's parcels arrived in good time, and I have just written to thank her: at the same time your letter enclosing the stamps, enough to last a long while, which will be very useful from time to time. Thank you very much.

Of the things I have sent you *to eat* which do you like best? So that I can send some more.

To-day has been a repetition of yesterday — kept fine by a boisterous, westerly gale, with one very fierce but very brief hail-storm.

After luncheon I repeated my yesterday's walk along the shore nearly to P——, but soon after I started a young French soldier came running up and joined on, and so my walk was not solitary. He is not the one of yesterday — the gentleman — *his* name is Gerard Brulard: the one of to-day is called Ernest Richer, and he is a chasseur-à-pied. In a few days he goes back to the front. I met him first a week ago helping some peasants to pick flints on the shore. I asked him what they did with them, and he says they are sent to china-factories, broken up small, then melted. I know that flints do enter into the *prescription* of some sorts of porcelain. They only use the black ones. I showed him some very translucent stones *I* had picked up and he said, "There are very few like that." On the contrary it seems to me there are millions. I am going to ask if there is any lapidary here and see if any of those I find are worth the cost of polishing.

These two lads, almost exactly the same age, Richer

of to-day and Brulard of yesterday, are of quite different types. Richer a peasant and quite uneducated, Brulard a gentleman and both clever and well-educated: but both have the same excellent French naturalness and simplicity. In the things most people go by, as to French good manners, I myself think the English have as good or better; but I couldn't go for a walk with a Wiltshire village lad without finding him either very lumpish or rather bumptious: these French soldiers perfectly *know* the difference of station, etc., but don't think about it.

(There is a fastened-up door between this room and the next, and the people in it have gone out and left their window open: the result is that through the keyhole there is a noise coming like the puff of a fog-horn!)

I certainly shall not make friends — you need not warn me — with the ancient Paint Box; she is truly frightful, I'd much rather talk to a Black Maria. As a matter of fact I don't make friends with any of our lady guests, though most of whom are very quiet, middle-aged French women, with husbands to match. Very few stay more than a few days.

I laughed at your saying that you want to smack Cobbett when he gets to his political tirades: but he is very fond of *us*, if you mean by *us*, Catholics. His little inconsistencies are funny; for instance, he says that running about from place to place is the ruin of people's happiness and character (what would he say in these motoring-days?) and he himself is perpetually gadding about on that marvellous horse of his.

"Tom Brown at Oxford" is quite deadly. The conversations are enough to send you into a state of coma.

The editress of *St. Joseph's Lilies* tells me that a young but famous American (or Canadian) poet has been converted by reading "Gracechurch;" I'm glad.

I must stop — as you see I have nothing to say. Considering that I never do anything here, it is miraculous

that I can make you a letter six days a week. This goes, of course, by to-morrow's boat, next day there won't be any.

Monday, April 12, 1915

YESTERDAY was a heavenly day, and I believe to-day will be, after the morning mist has lifted.

I'm sorry I was so stupid about the seeds. I'm afraid I've made them very late: they ought to have been sown a month ago.

I am leaving Dieppe to go to Versailles, to be in charge of that hospital where Ver was. I have not had the official order yet, but Monsignor Keatinge wrote privately. I am glad for some things, sorry for others.

This place is *very* expensive; and there is no one here to know: it is a bit *lonely*. Whereas I know a few really nice people in Paris, and Versailles is only about half an hour from Paris.

Everyone tells me the place is charming, the parks, woods, gardens, etc., glorious, and the distance in *time* from England much the same: for one has to go from Dieppe to Folkestone four or five hours, whereas the express from Paris gets to Boulogne in three hours, and the passage *thence* to Folkestone is only one and one half hours.

Anyway, I've got to go. Go on addressing here till I write or wire another address. The address, I *believe*, is "General Hospital, Hotel Trianon, Versailles, Paris." But you must continue to put B. E. F. or Expeditionary Force, otherwise it will be 2½d postage.

The best way will be for you to go on addressing A. P. O. S. 8, until I either telegraph or write: if I telegraph I may merely use the word "Leaving" or "Departing": it will mean, "Now address General Hospital, Hotel Trianon, Versailles, Paris, Expeditionary Force." Comte du Manoir tells me that Versailles is particularly airy and fresh in summer, and he is writing to tell friends

of his to come and see me. I really look forward to walks in the great park there. I am like a cat and dislike *all* changes of place, but I think the moment I have left Dieppe I shall be delighted with the change to Versailles.

I must make a dash for the post.

Monday, April 12, 1915

I WROTE to you this morning, and was just in time for the post. This afternoon I spent serving behind the counter of the big hut the Y. M. C. A. (Young Men's Christian Association) has put up here for the English soldiers. I offered to help, as the good folks who are "running" it are short-handed; and it is an excellent thing for the soldiers. They can get tea, coffee, cakes, tobacco, cigarettes, etc., there all day, and can write letters, and read newspapers. It really makes no attempt to interfere with the men's religions, and the best way for me to prevent its doing so, if it wanted, is (I think) to help myself, and so let them feel I know what goes on in it. And it shows the men, too, that one takes an interest in their comfort.

I hope you won't be too much disappointed at my move from this place to Versailles. Everyone tells me it is charming there, and, as I have told you, it will be much more economical. Somehow I don't yet feel sure that I *shall* go, though Monsignor Keatinge has told me I should. He did not, when he wrote, know, I think, that Father Constant, the English-speaking French Jesuit, is leaving here, too, in a day or two. . . . The first Sunday there were nine at Mass: then eleven, fourteen, seventeen, and so on: forty-three the Sunday before Easter, eighty on Easter Sunday, and one hundred and thirteen last Sunday.

At Versailles I shall have no troops, only a large hospital: I mean no *well* troops, only sick or wounded.

It's no use talking about it; we can only wait and see — like Mr. Asquith.

I have no doubt I shall like it if I do go.

You will continue to get your almost daily letters from me, which is all I can do to cheer you up in my absence.

Tuesday, 7 P.M., *April* 13, 1915

LAST night I had fastened up my letter to you and gone down to dinner, when I got the official order to go to Versailles on Thursday, so I opened the letter and told you so in a post-script. The old archpriest was very funny about it all this morning. "They send you here," he said, "when there are only sixty Catholic soldiers and an English-speaking priest on the spot; now the priest is not available, and there are three hundred Catholic soldiers, they take you away, and say they will send no one in your place.". . . He says he is desolated to lose me, and it is rather a triumph, for I don't think he cottoned to me at first.

Of course I am not to be pitied going to Versailles, one of the most interesting places in France, and within *short* reach of a dozen others. The hotel which is our hospital is said to be one of the finest in Europe.

I know I shall like it: only I'm rather sorry for these three hundred Catholic soldiers left without an English priest; and I hope they will behave themselves. These Base towns are full of temptations, it is not like the front. . . .

By the time you get this I shall be at Versailles, as I leave here at midday on Thursday.

I cannot write to you that night, but will on Friday. I hope you will get that letter on Sunday or Monday. I can't make out why the Good Friday letter took such a time reaching you.

I have just been shown some pictures of the park at Versailles, just outside the Hotel Trianon (our hospital)

and it must be lovely; I shall love walking in it. You will get dozens of post-cards for your book! To-day I had a long letter from Madame Clary. . . I make out bits at a time.

It is a horrible day to-day, howling wind and rain, and I have been writing letters all afternoon — this the fourteenth! So my brain feels spongy and I will stop.

Any newspapers and magazines will be very useful now for the hospital.

Wednesday, April 14, 1915

This will be my last letter from Dieppe, as I leave for Versailles to-morrow morning at 6.30. I find that if I waited till the midday train I should arrive at Versailles too late in the evening. This letter can only be a very short one, as I am in the throes of packing. It is never a charming occupation, and my possessions have swelled since I came here, so much persuasion and some firmness is necessary to induce them to go into the receptacles I have for them.

To-day began as rainy as the last three or four days, but suddenly became fine at midday, and so after luncheon I went for a good-bye walk — along the shore to Pourville, and back the same way.

It was rather hard going, as the sand deposited by the late high tides has all been washed away again. But it looked very pretty, and I enjoyed it. It will be a pleasant change to have the smooth roads and avenues of Versailles, the great park to walk in, and I and my boots are looking forward to it.

I said my last Mass at St. Jacques at 6.30 this morning, and the old archpriest was very cordial in his farewells.

I really think the MS. I sent to the Northern Newspaper Syndicate must be somewhere with you: the one you sent me was the MS. of "*French and English*" for the *Month*.

The old Commandant d'Armes here, Comte du Manoir, whom you call the General (which he would like to be, I'm sure) has already written to an old friend of his, the Comte de l'Argentine, who lives at Versailles to come and be civil to me. He told me rather a funny story: another friend of his, a Count and also a General, is preternaturally thin, with a face like a death's head. He had to attend a great military funeral, on horseback, with all his staff. The little Paris street arabs pointed to him and called out, "Oh, the pigs! they have made the poor corpse ride!"

There is quite a glorious sunset going on outside, and I must go outside too, to post this, and to leave them my new address, so that anything arriving may be sent on.

In fierce haste.

Paris, April 15, 1915

It is 12.30, noon, and I have just had my luncheon, for which I was quite ready, as I breakfasted at Dieppe before six and have had a four and a half hours' railway journey since.

I shall go on to Versailles as soon as I have written you this note. There are trains every hour, and it only takes half an hour: also the trains for Versailles go from this station, so one has not the trouble of cabbing it across Paris.

There was a thick fog from the sea at Dieppe, but the sun came out at once and it became an exquisite morning. The town of Dieppe (the *sea* is quite out of sight from the train) looked very picturesque as I left it, its many "basins" reflecting many ships, steep hillsides with houses peering out of the trees, the mist and the smoke of new-lighted fires. The images of the ships, upside down in the water, flashed and gleamed in the sun.

The journey from Dieppe to Rouen, and from Rouen (where I had three-quarters of an hour to wait) to Paris, was quite lovely this perfect morning.

The train never leaves the Seine, but runs quite close to its brimming edge all the way. It is a very broad stream, wider than the Thames at Richmond, and the valley, wide and flat, is an image of richness; then it curves between high cliff-banks, of very picturesque shapes — there are frequent forests just breaking from purple to canary-green. The river banks are laced with willows already in tender leaf, and the primroses were out everywhere. I can tell you I thoroughly enjoy the change; my little bedroom at Dieppe was charming in its way, but two months was enough of it.

Be sure and tell me *when* you get this letter, which I shall have to entrust to the civil post-office.

Now I must go and get shaved! I will tell you something — I wear uniform now and look rather *toffy* in it!

The Christie catalogue, the *Catholic World*, and *St. Joseph's Lilies* all arrived in time for me to bring and read in the train on the way here.

But *how* you waste your money on stamps by overstamping!

The catalogue and the books had each fourpence too much on them. One pound goes for fourpence by *letter post:* and up to two pounds for eightpence. And they *never* surcharge, even if you *had* put too little on.

Thursday, April 15, 1915

I HAVE just arrived and reported myself, and it is about 4.15; at 4.45 the post goes, so I am just in time to send this line to tell you I had a *charming* journey: but I wrote to you about that from Paris, and posted the letter in the civil post. I wonder which you will get first, this or it.

Versailles seems *quite delightful*, and the hospital is a lovely huge building in a lovely garden immediately adjoining the glorious park.

I am relieving Father Morgan here, and he has gone to Tréport, near Dieppe.

I will write a proper letter later on.

The Commanding Officer begs to say that the address should be:

No. 4 General Hospital,
B. E. F.

only, without Versailles, or Paris. You know it *is* Versailles, and that's enough.

Friday, April 16, 1915

After writing my short note to you yesterday afternoon, to say I had arrived, I sallied forth with the Colonel commanding the hospital, who rejoices in the extraordinary name of Smith. He took me to tea at their mess, which is in a house they rent — the hospital is too full of patients: there are about twenty medical officers. Father Morgan lived in a flat, so as *he* did not belong to the Medical Officers' mess, I began to think I wouldn't.

The Colonel was very civil; he lent me a motor-car, and a motor ambulance: the former to cart *me* round about the town in search of hotels, lodgings, etc., and the other to fetch my baggage, which I had left in the station cloak-room. He also lent me a young French interpreter, whom I took, not to interpret, but because I thought he would know places where one might apply for quarters. He is very nice, a gentleman, and of excellent manners. However, he took me to two hotels (the only two open) and I thought both very dear, rather stuffy, and very noisy. So we motored off to a convent, and the Reverend Mother recommended this place, and we came and looked at it.

It is quite a good house, in the middle of a nursery-garden! I have an *excellent* bedroom, twice the size, at least, of the one at Dieppe, extremely clean and with very good furniture. I have the sole use of a quite

grand dining-room: the food is *much* better than at Dieppe, and the total expense is exactly half what it was there.

Versailles hotels are noisy, but this house is beautifully quiet: the garden runs up to the wall of the great park. I have such lovely flowers in my room, huge sprays of primula, orchids, and *plum* blossom! The man is a specialist in orchids. His name is Beranek, and he is a Czech (Bohemian), naturalized in France: a very intelligent, respectable man. The wife is French, Alsatian, a comfortable, elderly, nice body, most respectful and respectable, and a first-rate cook. There are two girls, one about eleven or twelve, and about twenty, the latter with a serene, holy face, like a north Italian Madonna.

The nuns know these people well, and recommended them cordially: and I am delighted to have heard of them. The convent-chapel is just across the road and I said Mass there this morning with a French wounded soldier to serve. Very nice nuns, one French Canadian.

I have only just finished visiting the hospital and also had a little peep into the park: it is delightful — such glorious avenues in every direction, all now breaking into tender leaf.

. . . Oh my! what curiosity shops! If I were a millionaire I should only be one for about a week, as I should spend all my cash on old clocks, bronzes, tapestry, snuff-boxes, etc.

The convent used to be a little snug *cottage ornée* of Madame de Pompadour! What a change of tenancy!

Tell me when you get this. I picked these celandines in the park.

Friday evening

I AM writing to you again already, though I only wrote to you after luncheon to-day, because I foresee a busy day to-morrow, and may not be able to write before post-time.

I went round the corner to the hospital (it is only eight or nine minutes' walk) after finishing my letter to you, and was there a good while. Among other useful things I achieved was this — I persuaded "Smith (he wishes to call me "Drew," and me to call him "Smith") — well, I induced Smith, much against the grain, to give me the permanent use of a room in the hospital as a little chapel.

It is a *very nice* room, on a staircase of its own, entered by a door from the garden, and so quite private, quiet, and exactly what I would have chosen. I have the key, and it is my chapel as long as I'm here: to-morrow morning I am going to fit it up: it will need no cleaning, being as clean as a new pin, not used at all by any one else since the hotel has been a hospital. Out of it opens another room also unused, but filled with furniture put away: Smith allows me to use what I want of it, so I shall have as many chairs as I want and *very nice ones*, and there is a sort of cabinet with handsome front and long marble top (just the right height) that will make an excellent and really very handsome altar.

There are also plenty of candlesticks, vases, etc. Isn't it a "scoop"?

You must understand these two rooms are shut into a sort of private corridor of which I have the key. I imagine the Sunday morning Mass congregation will prove too large for this chapel, and that will have to continue in the tent used by Father Morgan; but for the Sunday *evening* service, and for Mass and Holy Communion on certain days of the week, and evening prayers on other week days, and for hearing confessions, it will be splendid, and will make all the difference.

Well, after Smith and I had inspected this room and I had collared the key (he grumbling all the while and saying, "I don't know how you got over me. I don't know why I said you should have it. I suppose you must now"), we went downstairs, and there was Lady

Austin-Lee from the Embassy, and she was most cordial and said how glad she was to know me, and asked me to come to luncheon, which I am going to do.

She had hardly gone away when a tall young Lancer Officer and his wife came in (all this was in the entrance-hall) and I thought: "That's young Brooke, half-brother of the Wyndham boy who was killed the other day" (you know Mrs. Guy Wyndham was Mrs. Brooke, a widow) "and that's his wife."

I used to meet them at Amesbury Abbey, and to go to tea with them at Fittleton Manor House; he was in the Cavalry School, at Netheravon.

Well, the lady came up and said, "Are you not Dr. Brooke?" Of course I said no, and turned away, thinking I had made a mistake; just as she evidently had. Presently I saw the husband staring at me, and he said to her, "Isn't that Monsignor Drew?" I laughed and said, "Yes; aren't you Mr. and Mrs. Brooke?" They were. And she had really known me all along and muddled up my name. So we had a talk about the poor Antrobuses, the two dead ones, and Lady A. Wasn't it an odd meeting and recognition?

Then I went for a long stroll in the park and gardens of the château: it is all quite enchanting, and I like and admire it more each time I go. . . . First I walked down beautiful avenues, turned to my left to the Grand Canal, and so came to the Basin of Apollo. It is a really lovely group of bronze, facing up toward the palace. Then I turned still left, always through lovely allées and avenues, and came to part of "the King's Garden." Of course *all* this, park, gardens, basins, canals, fountains, avenues, alleys, terraces, was laid out by Louis XIV, and, whatever else he lacked, he had a magnificent taste as a creator. The King's Garden is not one of the formal parts of the vast design, but a lovely green garden of banks, sloping and flat groves, and thickets, and shrubberies, with beautiful tall and rare trees growing up out of the shrubs

and preventing monotony or stiffness. Of course there are statues everywhere, marble, bronze, and lead. So I came to the bosquet of the colonnade. The colonnade is very wide, of double columns, all of marble, with a cornice and entablature connecting them into a huge oval: in the middle is the marble group of the Carrying off of Proserpine by Zeus. Keeping up hill (the palace stands on a plateau high above the park) I came to avenues, like wheel-spokes, all having open glades midway down, with a basin and a lovely bronze group, illustrating the Four Seasons . . . two on the left of the Grand Avenue, two to the right. So I came up onto the Grand Terrace, an *enormous* open space in front of the palace. A vast marble staircase leads down toward the Canal and the Basin of Apollo: halfway down it is broken by another huge open space with the Fountain of Latona in the middle. The green beasts all round are turtles, with open mouths for water to spout through — during the war all the young gardeners are gone away to fight, and the fountains do not play. . . . To right and left of the Grand Staircase, above the Basin of Latona, is another basin, with very well-done groups on each side, of fighting beasts. . . . Then the left-hand basin: on one side is a huge hound bringing down a stag; on the other two fighting polar bears. Each animal pours water from his mouth!

Then I turned toward the palace: two immense basins, surrounded by really glorious bronze groups, flank the approach. Groups of children, river-gods, river-nymphs, etc.

The views from the terrace are splendid — over the park, and beyond it, over wooded hills. I passed right through the palace to the entrance from the town of Versailles. But I did not attempt to *do* the palace. . . .

What I did was to recross the palace, and go down by the other side of the Grand Avenue to the Basin of Apollo and so home.

Besides Versailles, there are the two Trianons to visit, the Grand Trianon and the Petit Trianon, Marly, Meudon, St. Germain, etc.

So I shall have lots to see and to tell you about. Meanwhile I have ungratefully forgotten to thank you for the pin book, which is very useful and for which I *do* thank you, though unpunctually.

I got Alice's parcel of books just as I was leaving Dieppe.

Please don't put "Versailles" in the address, only No. 4 General Hospital: the censor here told me about it!

I must go to bed.

Saturday Night

It is really bed-time, and I am sleepy; but I must write you a little letter.

All this morning I was working at my chapel in the hospital: and it is really charming. One of these days I will try and get someone to photograph it for you: but officers are no longer allowed to have cameras.

All afternoon I was in the wards, and found it very interesting. There were a few German patients, wounded like our own men, and I gave them rosaries, medals, etc. They were delighted. And they said how comfortable they were, and how kind everyone was to them. Our men are really splendid to them, so cordial, brotherly and friendly.

The people I lodge with give me exquisite flowers for my chapel, heaps of primulas, and lovely ferns, and rare orchids. They seem quite excellent people, and I am most lucky to have found such a place. Everything was so horribly dear in the Dieppe hotel.

But I must go to bed!

Sunday Evening, April 18, 1915

I received your letter of Thursday this morning, and was delighted to feel again in touch with you. That

letter was addressed here: no doubt the letter written on Wednesday, addressed to A. P. O. S. 8, will arrive to-morrow.

I am so sorry that Alice has left you again, and to think she was anxious, but I think without occasion — on the contrary I think she should bless the lumbago that has dragged Ver out of those awful trenches. Of course it is a tiresome, tedious malady, but certainly not dangerous, and the trenches *are* dangerous. There was no reason to be anxious because they sent him home, for no patients are kept *long* out here: all diseases or wounds that require time and long treatment are sent home, as soon as the patient can travel. It sounds brutal, but if I were Alice I should be in no great hurry for him to be well enough to go back to the fighting line. All the same I know how you and her mother will miss her cheerful presence.

To-morrow I am going in to Paris to lunch with Lady Austin-Lee, whose husband is Secretary of our Embassy there.

I had Mass at nine this morning in my new chapel, and the men appreciated it immensely. A Sergeant Doyle, with a face beside which mine looks pale, played the harmonium.

Then I came home and had my tea: then I went for a walk till luncheon. It was quite delicious, a most perfect spring morning with all the buds on the trees opening visibly in the sunlight, and an exquisite blue sky behind the brown and primrose lace of the branches.

Entering the park by the gate next our hospital, I walked straight down a great triple avenue to the gates of the two Trianons — I turned right, and got into the gardens of the Little Trianon. The palace is quite small, what in Italy would be called a casino, but the grounds are very large, and very countrified and delightful. The trees so old that most of them must be the very ones under which poor Marie Antoinette sauntered in

her *beaux jours*. There are no avenues or allées: the trees are in groves, or dotted here and there on lovely natural-looking lawns; there are innumerable narrow walks, winding in and out, up and down little hillocks, often among thickets of very old yews. Here and there a little pond, not a stone basin, with swans: no bronze groups, or fountains, no statues. The whole thing is eloquent of the poor Queen's desire to escape from royalty and palace-life, and have a little corner of her own, away from the intolerable etiquette of Versailles, where she could feel she was in a country-house garden, instead of in the magnificent gardens of a palace.

After spending quite an hour in the lawns and thickets of the Petit Trianon, I turned to find the very easy way to the Grand Trianon, which is quite close to it. Passing behind the Queen's dairies, and her kitchen garden, I saw rows of very old standard magnolia-trees lifting their divine heads over the high wall. You never saw such lovely magnolias, all covered with thousands of enormous blossoms — not the greenish-yellow sort, but pure white with crocus-purple outer petals, and this white against the blue sky was indescribably beautiful.

Then I came to a large stone basin, full of deep water; at first I thought people had been throwing oranges into it, but I found, when I went close to the edge, that they were very stately, aldermanic gold-fish: huge, about two pounds weight each, and nearly old enough to be the very ones the Queen put there.

Then I came to a slope leading down to an open, formal glade, with another stone basin and a bronze group in the middle of it: all around marble busts of Roman emperors and famous ancients on marble plinths.

In every direction from the palace (Grand Trianon) avenues ray out, like wheel-spokes: but they all end in a real informal wood, or forest, part of the Versailles park.

The Grand Trianon is large and really most beautiful, but only one storey: no upstairs at all. The peristyle

is very fine and of a beautiful, simple, but grandiose style — still a palace. And it is only a very short mile from the huge palace of Versailles — no wonder the starving people growled to see hundreds and hundreds of thousands spent on building this utterly unnecessary house for a lady who had so vast a house barely out of sight, perhaps twelve hundred yards away. Of course it has given delight to millions of people since, and no doubt the Republic recognises that and so keeps it all up.

I did not visit the *insides* of either palace, as I have not visited those of Versailles — I only wanted to get to know the ground, and *realise* the places. Later on I will go inside.

I got home just in time for luncheon and then spent the afternoon till 4.30 visiting the wards.

At 4.30 I went to tea with Rowan, the Church of England chaplain, a nice fellow, youngish, whom I used to know at Bulford long ago. He is just married — in February — and the young lady came out and they were married here. However, wives are forbidden, and she is being sent home to-morrow. She is quite a girl, pretty, at present afflicted with a vehement cold in her head.

At 5.30 I had my evening service; then came home, dined, and then sat down to give you this account of my day.

And now to bed.

Monday, April 19, 1915

I HAVE just had my dinner and now I am sitting down to write and tell you my doings.

I said Mass at the convent at eight — they won't have a 6.30 A.M. Mass! Then came across here to breakfast. Then went down to the hospital where I found your letters of Friday morning and Friday afternoon.

I can't see why Alice and Christie should be anything but delighted to have Ver home, especially if he is to have a recruiting billet in the Isle of Wight, instead of going back to those fearsome trenches. Lumbago is a thorough nuisance, but it is infinitely preferable to a Black Maria in the pit of one's stomach. What I regret is your losing Alice, and I know what a difference it must make.

Well, after reading my letters I did various jobs, and at a quarter to eleven made a dash into my beloved park, where I find out new places and new beauties every time. I could only stay a short time, then cut up the Grand Approach to the palace, crossed it, and went down to the Place d'Armes on the other side, whence the tram to Paris starts.

There are three ways of going to Paris; two ways by train, and one by tram. The tram takes a little longer — about one and a quarter hours, but it is a little more interesting, passing through Sèvres, St. Cloud, etc. And it stops close by the Avenue du Trocadero, where Sir Henry and Lady Austin-Lee live.

The first noticeable thing one passed on reaching Paris was the Eiffel Tower, which I think monstrous, though the Parisians are as proud as Punch of it. . . . Opposite, on the other side of the Seine, is the Trocadero, also monstrous, though less so.

The Austin-Lees live in a fine flat high up (*4ème étage*) with a magnificent view from the windows. Sir Henry was just coming in from the Embassy, where, as I told you, he is First Secretary. He is a handsome, oldish man, rather deaf, with a regular diplomatist's face and manner. He has been in Paris over thirty years, and was here with Lord Lyons, whom I knew long ago when I used to stay with the old Duchess of Norfolk, his sister. He met me at the door and we came up in the lift together. The other guest was a Mr. Urquhart, nice and simple, an Oxford Don, a Fellow of Balliol, but not at

all Donnish in his ways. Balliol is young Herbert Ward's college, and Mr. Urquhart knows him well. . . .

It amuses me to hear you speak as if Versailles was Paris; it is a regular country town, though a fair sized one (three times the size of Salisbury, and two hundred times livelier), with its own Bishop, and even in a different "Department" from Paris.

Well, after luncheon I walked from the Avenue du Trocadero, to the St. Lazare station, about twenty-five minutes' walk: crossing the Champs Elysées and in front of the Arc de Triomphe: passing close by the hotel where you, I, Aunt Lizzie, and our pilgrims stayed on our way from Rome in 1895.

At 4.20 I got a train out here, and Versailles seemed quite home-like and countrified after huge Paris.

And that's all I have to tell you. . . .

Now I'm going to my by-bye. So good night.

Tuesday Morning, 8.30 A.M.

Postscript to last night's letter.

I HAVE just received *four* envelopes from you, one with your letter of this day week, Tuesday afternoon, the 13th, one with your letter of the following morning and two merely enclosing forwarded letters.

All these left Dieppe on Saturday, so they have taken three days to come! That is sheer rot, as the railway-journey only takes seven hours.

The censor here is a young doctor, not really an officer in peace-time, but taken on for the war: not of purely imperial (or even royal) descent, I fancy, rather full of importance. All the same he won't open my letters, you may always be sure of that: nor yours to me — *no* letters *from* England are opened, even to the soldiers.

I said Mass in my own chapel this morning and loved it; it is so pretty and so quiet and devotional. Eight soldiers came, two Germans.

"We are brothers here in hospital, *all* of us," I said to one of them; "but everywhere you are my son, for I am a priest."

"Oh, yes!" he said, "you are my father: but if Peace would be quick and come and end this ugly war we could all be brothers again."

This is only a Postscript.

Tuesday Evening, 7 P.M.

I HAVE not so much to write about this evening, but here I am back at my writing-table which I have moved into the window to write there till it is dark enough to light my lamp.

All the foreground is nursery garden: to the left are rows of *serres*, greenhouses and hot-houses, more to the left is a suburb, and beyond it an arm of the park.

I had two walks in the park to-day, one at the end of the morning, just before luncheon, not a long one. I approached it from the palace, and walked down through various allées to the Basin of Apollo, and back by the allées on the other side: revisiting the fountains of the Four Seasons; from each of them eight avenues ray out, like wheel-spokes.

All afternoon I was in the hospital, and about 4.30 Lady Austin-Lee, who had been also visiting it, met me with an English friend, married to a French Viscount — Madame de la Vauguyon, I think, but I did not quite catch the name. If it is de la Vauguyon her husband is descended from a very charming, but terribly poor courtier of Louis XIV, who shot himself one Sunday morning while everyone was at Mass, in his bed, here at Versailles, because he had not bread to eat. His poverty and misery had turned his head, and he had done some very mad things before.

Lady Austin-Lee was very gracious. A General de Chalain, had been, and still was, waiting in the hall to see me; sent by Comte du Manoir.

I showed the ladies my chapel, and they were enchanted, and thought me a magician to have raised it in a day out of the means I had. The furniture in it is very good and beautiful.

. . . Then I came home to tea, and afterwards walked off to the two Trianons. Most of the time I spent in the Little Trianon, wandering in the lovely glades and groves; and I saw the little farm, by a small lake, so often read of all my life, where poor Marie Antoinette used to milk her cows.

It was an exquisite evening, and the sunlight of the falling day among those budding trees was most lovely, tender, and gentle. Poor Queen! she hadn't too much sense, but the price she paid for her silliness was so bitter; and her ghost haunting those glades and gardens is all gentle and pathetic. I picked you these celandines and dog-violets and leaves there.

Again I went round into the larger, more formal, avenues of the Grand Trianon, and surprised a young officer and his sweetheart, but hurried away, and I don't think they knew I had seen their billing and cooing — the doves up in the trees were noisier about it.

I saw several rare birds — wild birds. A wonderful little creature (a pair of them, rather) with a longish fire-coloured tail, and blue-black body, and scarlet and blue head: and some woodpeckers I did not know before, kingfisher shaped, but twice the size, and of electric colouring like a kingfisher, only darker in tint. And so I strolled home. There were very few people in the parks, mostly of the quite upper class, such as one never saw at Dieppe: one very charming-looking young French officer strolling with his mother, a widow, and both of them looking very happy and confidential.

(Dinner!)

(After dinner.)

I could not speak to them, though I should have liked to; but I made a little prayer that all would go well with

them, and that nothing would ever deprive the mother of her son.

There are 20,000 French troops here; another contrast to Dieppe, where there were only the wounded, and the Belgian troops in the barracks.

I don't think I have any more to tell you: except that the nuns at the convent where I go and say Mass on some of the days in each week when I don't say Mass in my chapel, have sixty wounded: and one of them, a young aëroplanist ("aviateur" as they call it). He is quite charming: a gentleman, with a most wonderfully pure and holy face. I have long talks with him, as he goes about on his crutches. Up in the air he was attacked by a German aëroplane, and its bombs smashed him and his machine, he was hit in the head, in the shoulder, in the thigh, in the hip, and in the chest. The machine fell to ground only two hundred yards from the German trenches, and he was shot again and again. And now he is getting quite well.

It all sounds so ghastly, and he is so cheerful and so simple, and "unbraggy" about it.

Now I'm going to dry up.

Friday Night, April 23, 1915

I HAD another letter from you to-day, the one in which you tell me of Mrs. Gater's visit, and of Mickie having bitten Mr. Major's leg. . . . No, there is not the least objection to your saying where I am. . . .

The Salle des Glâces at the Grand Trianon is interesting, because the "glâces," the huge panels of looking-glass, date from Louis XIV's time. They consist of smallish squares pieced together, big mirrors all in one piece not being attainable then. The immense round table is all one bit of wood, Malabar oak, the section of a huge tree-trunk; it served for Council Table to Louis Philippe's ministers. The next card would be more appropriately

inscribed Louis Philippe's bedroom if he had ever used it; but it was Louis XIV's, the "Grand Dauphin's" (Louis XIV's son) Madame Mère's, the mother of Napoleon I, and the bed was her bed.

No. 3 is of the Salon des Malachites — called from the huge malachite vase in the middle, given by the Emperor of Russia to Napoleon I, after the Peace of Tilsit.

No. 4 is Napoleon's study, where he worked and wrote.

No. 5 his bedroom: really that of Marie Louise — the bed is an exquisite bit of furniture, and there is a lovely, enormous Sèvres vase on the cabinet at the foot of the bed.

No. 6 is a little private salon of Napoleon I's, and the table in the middle is all of glorious mosaic, given to him by Pius VII — it cost a million francs, and was made in the Vatican atélier.

No. 7 is a round hall with a statue-group representing France and Italy kissing each other: France's figure is that of the Empress Eugénie.

No. 8 is one of the splendid suite of rooms prepared for Queen Victoria by Louis Philippe.

In June, 1789, after the States General had been at last assembled, the Third Estate, what we should call the Commons, who had not the right to sit with the First Estate, the clergy, and the Second Estate, the nobles, and had their own hall of meeting, had invited those other Estates to meet them, and declare themselves a National Assembly. Louis XVI had the folly to shut the doors of their hall in their faces — on June 20, 1789. Whereupon they went off to the huge hall called Jeu de Paume — the Tennis Court, half a mile from the palace. There they all took an oath never to separate till they had given a Constitution to France. That was one of the most memorable days the world has ever seen.

I went to the place this afternoon, and persuaded the caretaker to let me in. It is quite unchanged, except for the huge picture filling one end, representing the

meeting, for the statue of Bailly the President, and the other statues (busts, rather) of the other notables who took part in the work of that day. It interested me more than anything I have seen here yet: though of course it has no beauty.

. . . To-morrow I intend seeing the inside of the palace of Versailles itself. . . .

The town itself is really charming: a real royal borough, fine, cheerful, clean, and of wonderful extent.

. . . Does all this description bore you to death? It has made me sleepy! And to bed I go.

Saturday, April 24, 1915

This morning I had a charming letter from Major Newland, and he said they both thought you looking much better than the last time they saw you. Mind you keep so!

This afternoon I went through the interior of the palace — Versailles itself. . . . A great number of huge rooms are picture galleries — immense canvasses, all of French wars, and not quite first rate for the most part. The tapestries, furniture, ceilings, chimney-pieces are all quite glorious: so are the views over the gardens and parks from the windows. . . . But the great interest to me comes from having read such a lot of French history and memoirs dealing with Versailles, so that seeing the famous rooms explains what one has read, and what one has read explains the rooms.

For the first time since I arrived I have not been to-day for a walk in the park or gardens.

I don't feel *letterish* to-night: partly because I have written ten or twelve other letters. So good night.

April 25, 1915

. . . I don't belong to No. 4 British Expeditionary Force, but to No. 4 General Hospital! There! ! !

I lunched with the Bishop of Versailles to-day, and he was quite charming, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The other priests present were the Vicar General, an old Chancellor, and I think the Secretary. All *really* cordial and friendly — the Versailles priests. This diocese is immense and contains many hundreds of thousands of operatives to whom the Bishop is a real apostle. He has no grand airs, or stiffness, but is most genial and wide-minded, and of a very warm, open heart. To me he was delightful, most brotherly and kind. I was not shy, but talked like a house afire, and my wise sayings were much approved! Fancy me jawing away in French!

After leaving the Bishop's I came home and then walked to the Trianons: visiting the little octagonal music-pavilion on the small lake, and the grotto where, as I told you, Marie Antoinette heard that the mob had come out from Paris and invaded Versailles; also I went again to the "Hameau," the little sham village where her dairy was and is, on the larger lake. These sham cottages are not in very good taste — really built of stone to imitate brick! Also I strolled all about in the thickets and glades, full of quiet strollers, to-day being Sunday. Then round by the Grand Trianon and so home, or rather to the hospital for evening church.

You will presently receive a parcel, *not* of goodies! I saw to-day a number of tiny chestnut trees, first shooting from the chestnuts, and I am going to steal some and send them home. Bert must plant and water them, and they must not die. I want to keep them as a little souvenir of Marie Antoinette's Trianon.

If I can find any seedlings of less common trees than horse chestnuts, well and good, but it will not be so easy.

Indeed I feel ashamed of seeing so much without you that you would love to see. But at least it gives me something to tell you about.

. . . Now I must stop.

Wednesday, April 28, 1915

I GOT your letter of Sunday morning, this morning, and your letter of Saturday, with pansies in it, yesterday. I send Christie a fat packet to-day, so you need not give up any of yours.

Yesterday I was godfather to young C. at his confirmation. The Bishop was so nice to him, and seemed wonderfully pleased at my being godfather: in his little address before confirming he alluded to it and to my high dignity, etc.

Then C. and I went for a drive, his first for four months, in the park and to Trianon. He had never been inside, and a special permission is necessary during the war, so I got him in and went all over it again. The furniture, Sèvres china, clocks, carved wood, etc., all seemed more fascinating than ever. Then we went and looked at the museum of carriages — really interesting and some of them very magnificent.

This morning I said Mass at the hospital chapel — no more news of our moving to Calais — still it is far from improbable.

Wednesday Evening, April 28, 1915

I SHALL not be able to write you at all an interesting letter to-day, for to-morrow's mail, because I have not done any lionising, or even been for a walk in the park.

It has been quite hot, of course not too hot: whereas up to Sunday was uncommonly cold, though bright.

. . . I am now reading Sir Archibald Alison's History of Europe, and am at present in the period immediately preceding the French Revolution: to read it *here* makes it doubly interesting. He is verbose and prosy, and treats you to too much disquisition of his own, of no profound force or value: still his *facts* are interesting. He makes a miracle of Marie Antoinette, a genius and a model of all excellencies. I cannot think of her as

a heroine before her fall: then she was indeed one. He evidently thinks Louis XVI's concessions, from the beginning of his reign, to the party of Liberty, were all blunders, but I don't see that the miserable return they met with alters their justice, or proves them anything but inevitable. If they had not been made, Louis XVI would have been beheaded just the same, only he would have deserved it.

It is astonishing to me to find that there is really an immensely widespread ogling at monarchy here, and that all over France there are associations to bring it back. But I am convinced that it is all a dream: that the time for making new kings in Europe is gone by, and that there is far more probability of existing monarchies collapsing. Who could be the monarch here? He would have to be a man of great power and force, a genius; and the Duke of Orleans is of no consequence, and the Napoleonic claimant of much less: both have passed their lives out of France and are out of touch with it. The great mistake of the Republic seems to have been its persecution of Religion: and of course the Monarchists make religion their "ticket": but I wonder how much the millions care?

This letter is rather like one of ——'s, and you will yawn your head off over it.

But as I have *seen* nothing to-day to tell you about, I am telling you the things I think about.

Now I'm off to bed.

Friday, April 30, 1915

I SENT you just now a pot of "rillettes" — a sort of pâté; but I don't think you will care for it as much as the French do.

I cannot write a proper letter to-day because a thousand and seven wounded have just turned up and I am very busy.

That does not look like moving our hospital at once. I fancy, if we move at all, it cannot be for another month or so.

My friend C. left the convent hospital the day before yesterday. Moved to another hospital at Montreuil near here: yesterday at lunch time I received an eager request to go and see him there: he was feeling lonely and desolate: and of course in very rough, barracky quarters.

Friday Night, April 30, 1915

I AM writing this for to-morrow's post as I so often do, though the date makes the letter seem a day longer on its way to you than it really is — for it will not leave Versailles till to-morrow evening about five. But when I have put off writing till the day itself I have often been prevented from writing at all before post-time.

I got up at 5.30 this morning and went to the hospital, as the thousand wounded were to have arrived at 6. However, fresh telegrams had arrived and they were not expected till 8.30 or 9, so I said Mass in my chapel there, came home to breakfast, and went back about 9.

One thousand and seven fresh patients arrived from the front, but a very few really very bad cases.

I spent the day in the hospital going round and finding out the Catholics, and so took no walk.

After I came in about five I did not go out again, but sat in my window reading Alison.

The trees are getting lovelier every day, and there is a wonderful border of tulips in this garden, a blaze of many colours, and some very wonderful ones.

But the *horticulteur*, my landlord, has only one man and a woman to work for him instead of the sixteen he usually employs: all the rest gone to the war.

I cannot tell you what nice and really good people he, his wife, and their two girls are. They only think of pleasing me and not at all of making money out of me.

The woman is one of the best I ever met, and I am indeed lucky that the good nuns recommended me to her kind care. Goodness, simple and honest goodness, is written in every line of the poor woman's face. Why "poor woman"?

I will tell you.

You must know that she speaks French with a strong provincial accent, and I thought it was Alsatian. Yesterday I said to her "Madame, you are not of Versailles?" "Oh, Monseigneur," she cried, clasping her hands, and bursting into tears, "I am a German. And the Germans have been so wicked: and it is terrible for me."

She and her husband are only French by naturalization, but have had their home here twenty-two years. Of course I comforted her, and said that there were many good Germans, and that it would be monstrous to blame *her* for what some of her countrymen had done.

But she is very unhappy, and perhaps frightened.

O dear! This war, what misery it brings upon the innocent. . . .

Yesterday, and to-day, have been very sultry, and it tried to thunder last night and to-night, but made no great hand of it.

All the Canadian wounded I have met here are English, or *American!*

Now I must stop; take good care of yourself, and with best love to Christie.

Sunday Morning, 6.30, May 2, 1915

I AM writing this, as you see, rather early, before beginning to dress: because after Mass I come home here to breakfast, and am then starting for Paris to see my wounded friend C., who has been moved from Montreuil to the Salpêtrière Hospital, in Paris, but on the side of Paris farthest from Versailles. It will take an hour and a quarter if not more to get there, and I must be back for my evening service at 5.30.

Yesterday morning I got a note from the Colonel asking if I would like to motor in to Paris to attend a concert given for wounded soldiers, and I said yes. We started at quarter to one and instead of taking either of the great roads (on the left bank of Seine, or right) we went through the forest of St. Cloud, and then the Bois de Boulogne: a most enchanting drive. The trees just in their tenderest leaf, most exquisite.

The concert was at the Trocadero, and we had splendid places, so had our wounded men, of whom we took three large motor-ambulances full. I never in my life was present at any entertainment so interesting. The performers were the stars of all the theatres in Paris: the programme was very long, three and a half hours, but not a tedious item on it. The five thousand wounded French soldiers in so many different uniforms made a most wonderful "house," and the enthusiasm for some of the items of the programme, everyone standing up, was pathetic, touching, moving, exciting. I send you the programme, and a song we all sang together, also an "image," a little picture of which everyone got a copy; everyone (five thousand!) also got a bouquet of lily-of-the-valley, a pipe, cigarettes, etc.

Quite punctually at two o'clock the President of the Republic, attended by his staff, entered the presidential box; the Marseillaise was played, and everyone stood. After an overture, by the Band of the Garde Republicaine (the finest military band in Paris), the President of the Chamber of Deputies made a speech, of which I both heard and understood every word. Then came the songs, recitations, dances — quite exquisite, and most simple, graceful and charming: also *divertissements*, little pieces, half acting, half singing, but very short.

The whole thing was an act of respectful gratitude, a testimony of admiration and veneration, often expressed, to the heroes whose broken bodies had stood between the homes of those who offered the fête, and invasion.

The final item was quite magnificent: first came bodies of soldiers in old-time dress, starting for a war, and being bidden God-speed by the villagers, the château-folk, etc. Then many more of different periods. Finally a detachment of present day chasseurs (each of these groups played its own music) and in front was a magnificent silk and gold tricolour: as they deployed, "France," dressed simply in unnumerable folds of white, with a huge blue and huge red sleeve, passed to the front, and the Marseillaise was sung as well as played: each of the principal performers took a verse, then she took hands with the rest: the whole house standing, saluting the Tricolour, and singing the final words of each strophe.

The enthusiasm, the *passion* of these people's love for France, was quite terribly pathetic and moving. Remember the soldiers listening had all *suffered* for France: many I saw were blind, blind forever: many armless; not one there that had not faced the invader and done his bit to push him back. In my life I never took part in any scene so thrilling, or so memorable.

Now I must dress. . . .

I want the programmes, etc., all kept, please.

Monday, May 3, 1915

This morning I received your letter of Friday, the first for two or three days. I was beginning to fear you might be seedy. I have a cold myself and am rather hoarse; the weather was so sultry last week I was always peeling off my tunic and sitting in shirt and trousers: then yesterday morning I sat writing to you in my pyjamas before dressing to go to Mass, and that finished it! The cold makes me feel very stupid, so don't expect much of a letter. We have heard no more news of our removal to Calais, but so far as we know we *shall* move, though perhaps not quite at once. In any

case the address will be just the same. I don't think the journey would cost me much, as I should travel on a pass.

Now I must go to the hospital.

You said the sultry weather had made you feel *blue:* cheer up, my dear, cheer up, and we shall all be happy together again soon.

Tuesday Evening, May 4, 1915

My cold was rotten last night and this morning, and I did not write; but now it has passed its worst and is beginning to make preparations for departure.

Meanwhile it is wonderfully hot weather — like a sunny sirocco, not the grey sort. It poured all last night, and the extreme heat of the ground sent it all up again in steam. That's what makes the heat oppressive.

To-day I see the swallows have arrived. I heard the cuckoo long ago, even at Dieppe; but *here* the great feature is the nightingales: I never heard them so *regular* in their permanence! In spite, however, of all the poets' flattery, I don't think their melody lovelier than that of the thrush or blackbird, certainly not than that of the thrush.

This afternoon after luncheon I had a long stroll in the glades and groves of the Little Trianon: it is much lovelier than when I arrived, so many more trees are in leaf or blossom.

I went early and there were very few people; here and there a quiet-looking lady reading or working under a tree.

The MS. of the "Sacristans" arrived some time ago: the one I wanted was "Poor Eleanor," which no doubt will turn up.

You say "what Bishop?" in reference to my mentioning *the* Bishop. The Bishop of Versailles. This is a Cathedral town, and the diocese quite enormous. Only the Seine divides it from the Paris diocese.

Thursday, May 6, 1915

My laryngitis is really better, but not gone: this moist heat — (really great heat) doesn't suit me a bit. However, to-day I can talk intelligibly; before I could only whisper, or whistle or squeak like a corn-crake.

The night before last the people here were quite excited by a big airship floating about over our heads, pursued everywhere it went by search-lights (it looked very pretty). But I guessed at once it was a French one, come to practise a surprise air-visit by night, and so it was.

I sent off the box containing clothing, etc., yesterday; it will take some time, as it had to go by ordinary rail.

The only thing for you in it is a pair of new scissors! *Don't* let Mary throw away the stones; the smaller ones are pebbles I picked up at Dieppe: the large one is a stone from the drawbridge at the Castle of Arques, over which Drogo walked forth on his way to England, never to return. I value it and want to keep it. Our trees out here must be far more advanced than yours: they are now at their loveliest.

I have at last got you the new post-card book and send it to-day: it will hold a good many.

I hope to visit St. Germain, Marly, and Malmaison, but they are not very easy to reach from here unless one has a motor, and besides one can't be always running off.

Now I must stop — a very dull letter, you will very truthfully say.

Thursday Evening, May 6, 1915

Besides all the letters that came early this morning, another arrived later in the day from you. It has no date.

This afternoon *after* some work at the hospital, and *before* some more, I trotted off to the Petit Trianon to

see the interior. It did not take long; the palace is very small. Quite near is the grotto where, as I told you, Marie Antoinette was sitting when a page came (on October 5, 1789) to tell her that the horrible Paris mob was attacking the palace at Versailles. The King was out hunting. She at once rose and returned to the palace at Versailles and never again saw Trianon. At Versailles the mob were murdering her guards and her servants; and that evening she and the King, with their children and Madame Elizabeth, were compelled to accompany the mob to Paris — the heads of their slaughtered guards carried on pikes beside them. The journey took *seven hours* and ended at the Tuileries, where they were, in fact, imprisoned.

I have finished the two volumes of Alison which end in the King's death; what a man he was! Certainly the purest and most unselfish of kings; and what a miracle of heroism she was.

Indeed nothing in your letter interests me more than the reminiscences called up by my mention of Alison. I always love to hear you speak of your childhood, and its memories; and I am *never* tired of them. Certainly I will find time to write, as Pierce asks, to Mr. Cameron. How can I, who find time to write daily to three or four Frenchmen, pretend that I can't make time to write to him? During the war I have given up all attempts to "write," *i.e.* for the press: but this long rest was really needed. My brain was getting *over-written*, and I shall write ten times better for the long rest, and have a vast new fund of interest and observation to draw on. So everything works out for the best.

Now good-bye. My cold is far better; the voice nearly come back and no cough or very little.

I don't care much for the tottery old representatives of the old régime one meets! I am a fervent monarchist, but why didn't they *keep* their monarchy? It's no use

now crying over spilt milk, and the Republic isn't going to go.

May 7, 1915

I WROTE you a meagre "Good night" in place of a letter last night and this morning — Wednesday morning — an equally hurried "Good morning" to enclose a small cheque.

To-night I have not much more material for a letter, as all I have done since was to go to Paris at midday, and spend the afternoon till five with my godson. It was not one of his days of "permission," *i.e.*, he could not come out, so all the time was spent in his big hospital. We divided it between his ward and the garden; sometimes sitting on a bench under the fresh green trees of the latter, sometimes walking. He walks better, and without crutches, but soon tires; he lost so much blood and his wounds were so many.

The ward is not at all like one of ours in No. 4 General Hospital: it dates, I should say, from the end of the seventeenth century, and is very low, with frowning old beams, very gloomy, and with a grizzly brick floor — a sort of attic. Our own hospital, installed in a magnificent, quite new hotel, is all light, freshness, and comfort, beautifully airy, and splendidly fitted up. The Salpêtrière is, however, a fine old place, with immense blocks of building covering a vast space, and very pretty old gardens.

Besides the thousands of wounded soldiers, the Salpêtrière contains many lunatics whom one does not see, as they are in quite a different part of it; and a number of old broken-down folk, whom one does see sunning themselves in the garden. F. has mad countless friends among these poor old creatures, and they turn adoring eyes on him as he passes. He has very grave eyes, but is a cheery and amusing person, and he compliments me by saying that in spite of having to use a language

that I do not speak correctly, though fluently, I am *very witty in French!* So there! No doubt you think I talk French perfectly; but that I never shall. I doubt if *anyone* who has not spoken it as a child ever does learn to speak French really *well*, *i.e.*, true French. The whole form of the language is different from ours, and its way of arranging ideas. Italian is much more like English in that way. Certainly I have made progress lately: but until I went to Dieppe I was almost entirely with English people and had few opportunities of practice: and even here I pass most of my time among the English, in the hospital, and so get less practice than you would think.

I am now *quite* well. But I intend giving my mouth a rest before having the other two teeth out. They do not ache at all, but one is badly broken and should come out. It has been really cold to-day, which I have not disliked at all. There is a very beautiful tree in flower now, lots of them in the gardens of the Salpêtrière, and lots by the Seine in Paris: a big tree, not a shrub, covered with masses of purple flowers — the soft lavender-purple of parma violets. You cannot think what a charming little journey it is in to Paris: the suburbs of Paris toward Versailles are enchanting. A long valley between wooded hills and all the houses dotted among the trees in delightful gardens. Lilac, white and purple; may, white and crimson; and numbers of others flowering trees everywhere. In this garden there are very pretty *double* white-lilac trees, and the blossoms look rather like huge spikes of white stocks.

Now I'm off to bed. God bless your sleep, my dearest darling, and send you only happy dreams. I say many Masses for you.

Saturday Evening, May 8, 1915

Your dear letter of Wednesday morning arrived *this* morning, and at the same time one from Christie

that had been wandering all over the place: she also had put No. 4 British Expeditionary Force.

The idea of a fire in a bedroom made me compassionate you, for here we have had the most sultry, siroccy weather I ever knew out of Malta; a sort of weather I hate, as it always makes me feel weak, and if I catch cold (as I generally do) I feel much more uncomfortable than with a cold in good, honest cold weather.

My present cold and laryngitis is nearly gone, and to-day I feel more myself. I only wrote a line yesterday as I was feeling horrid after the extraction of a tooth in four goes! I shall take a few days' rest before having another hauled out.

To-day we are all talking and thinking of the "Lusitania." I hope (we don't know here yet) it will turn out that *no* lives were lost.

George Parker has sent me a large portrait group of his clan, and I will send it home. About half of them are cousins of mine, nephews and nieces, or grand-nieces and nephews of my father: and they all look monuments of British respectability.

The azaleas in this garden are coming out and are very pretty, especially a common sort that I always loved, with rather small, flame-coloured flowers. The Custs and the Jebbs of the Lythe used to have these in their gardens.

My landlord has got hold of a lot of French soldiers to dig up and tidy up his garden for him; and they work very well and quickly. I reward them with "English" cigarettes and with chocolates.

During these last nights, dull, heavy, hot, and moist, the nightingales have been less vociferous, and I have not minded: they were really rather noisy early last week.

I send the portrait-cards I mentioned. Louis XV is handsome, isn't he? But he was a heartless scamp. Do you remember how one wet afternoon he stood at

a window of the palace here, and watched the last departure of his dead friend, Mme. de Pompadour, and said, coolly, "Madame has horrid weather for her promenade."

Louis XVI is not handsome at all, but "handsome is as handsome does." The portrait of Marie Antoinette is after Madame Vigée Lebrun's very famous one. I think the poor little Dauphin, ("Louis XVII") very charming, and a clever-looking little lad — they made an idiot of him by drink, etc., before he died. Madame de Lamballe was Marie Antoinette's dearest friend: and it was her lovely head that the mob hoisted on a pole under the Queen's prison-windows — and awful bits of her poor modest body.

I am glad you enjoyed my account of the Trocadero Concert; it certainly was wonderful, and unforgettable.

I am very glad you sent something to Sister Theresa Plater. She has a Jesuit brother to whom I am devoted.

Now I must shut up.

Wednesday, May 12, 1915

My cold is nearly gone, though not quite: the throat still hurts a little, but the pastilles I got from the French chemist never fail to relieve it; and his "syrop" has practically banished the cough. The same splendidly fine but fresh weather continues: last week, when it was so terribly hot, there was constant rain.

Yesterday afternoon, while I was working in the hospital, I came across Lady Austin-Lee, who had come out from Paris to visit our wounded. I had just written to her saying I could not lunch with her to-day: so she made me fix Saturday instead. . . . She had the Duchess de Bassano with her, a really delightful elderly lady, Canadian by birth, widow of a very famous Frenchman. . . . After tea I went for quite a long walk in the parks both of Versailles and Trianon: they were looking indescribably lovely, and at the Little Trianon the quietness and peace was marvellous. There was hardly a

soul there, and no sound but the "roo-coob" of the doves. You must understand that at Trianon there is no attempt at a *show* of flowers or shrubs, it is all *natural* looking: but the azaleas were something indescribable: in *one* thicket of them I counted nine different colours — whitey-cream; canary; sulphur; cinnamon; flame-colour; scarlet; rose; lilac; salmon; and such *masses* of bloom, as big as a giant's feather-bed. The smell of them, of the lilac and of the wistaria, filled the whole air.

Now I must go to the hospital, then to Paris to see C. in hospital.

Thursday Evening, Ascension Day

This morning I only had time to write you a mere word to say I could not write! A great many wounded have been coming in lately, and the proportion of *badly* wounded very high. Almost all from Ypres — it is quite frightful the losses that beastly spot has cost us. And of course this has made me very busy.

I came in to get my luncheon and found Vicomte de —— firmly seated in my dining-room, and he, having *had* his lunch, was determined to sit and jaw. He stayed ages, and at last I really had to get up and pack him off. A most worthy old gentleman, with the sad disease of nothing to do and a vehement desire to tell me all the clever things he ever said or wrote.

I am very busy in the hospital: two afternoons each week I go to cheer up F., and on Saturday I am lunching with Lady Austin-Lee.

I'm off to bed.

Friday Evening, May 14, 1915

Another very uneventful day gives me again very little to write about. I have been nowhere except to the hospital, where I have passed most of the day; and seen no one except the wounded, and Lady Austin-Lee, whom I met for a few minutes.

We expect many more wounded to-night, and are sending home many who only came in a couple of days ago. These large relays of wounded are a result of the definite forward movement always foretold for May, and I believe we really are making ground at the front, and the French, too. The cost in life is terribly sad, but cannot be surprising.

I am not quite so uncomfortable in my mouth to-day, and the laryngitis has really gone now.

That Vicomte de —— who harried me yesterday is a Norman, and Norman-mad like grandpapa — he can only talk and think of the Normans; and, oddly enough, I always become worse than indifferent to them when I have to do with someone like that.

Your letter of Tuesday, a particularly nice one, came to-day; I am so glad you like the post-card book, and I'm glad you agree with me about that much overrated fowl, the nightingale: I'd give twenty of them for one thrush.

From what you say about Marie Antoinette I fancy the "Life" of her you have been reading was my Madame Campan's Memoirs — the famous schoolmistress afterwards employed under Napoleon I to teach the wives of his Dukes and Marshals how to behave like court ladies. It is interesting, but not a patch on the later works like Le Notre's. I suppose the other book you are reading is some Memoir of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, and wife of the son of Charles X, Louis XVI's brother. Napoleon said she was the only *man* among the Bourbons of that time; but the sufferings and the horrors of her childhood, if they did not embitter her, made her permanently sad and morose, and she was not popular after the Restoration — she could not *forget;* and no wonder!

I know what a dull letter this is — but when one has not even been for a stroll in the park, what can one find to say?

It has turned very cold again which I do not mind at all; what I loathe is the sticky, muggy, hot weather.

Good night. I duly received your little spray of "Forget-me-not" — did you think it necessary!!

Saturday Night, May 15, 1915

YOUR letter of Thursday reached me early this morning — in less than two whole days: so we are getting on! I was working hard in the hospital, after Mass at the convent, till noon; then I caught a train to Paris and lunched with the Austin-Lees. Then I trained back and went straight to the hospital and worked there till dinner-time. Lady Austin-Lee informed me that the matron had been sounding my praises to her because I am so nice to the men.

That is all my day: except writing letters.

To-morrow after church at the hospital, and a little work there, I am off to Paris again to spend a long time with F.

I am not idle; but my doings don't give much to write about, do they?

Now I'm off to bed, so good night.

Monday, May 17, 1915

SATURDAY was quite cold, yesterday very hot, and to-day a deluge of cold rain: so England is not the only country with an inconsistent climate. It is not muggy rain this time, so I rather like than dislike it.

I got up early yesterday to put in a good bit of work, before nine o'clock Mass, at the hospital: after Mass came home, had my tea and dashed off to Paris, where I found F. awaiting me at the station. During a stroll on the Boulevards I suddenly felt a hand on my shoulder, and a delighted voice said, "Bickerstaffe-Drew!" It was Bourgade: do you remember him and Palluau in 1899? It amazed me, his recognizing me; for it is sixteen

years since he saw me, he never saw me in uniform, and it was only my back he saw this time. He walked along with us for quarter of an hour, and was simply overjoyed to see me again. He looks *very* middle-aged, and also very prosperous and amiable.

He was full of enquiries for you, too.

And that's all there is to tell you! I always feel a pig when I put you off with one of these scrappy letters — but though I enjoyed yesterday very much it was not the sort of day to provide much to talk about.

Monday Night, May 17, 1915

THOUGH I wrote to you this morning, and have done nothing since but work in the hospital, I am getting my letter for to-morrow ready, because I expect to be again busy in the wards all day to-morrow till after post-time. Our English mail came in to-day later than usual, and after I had written to you. It brought your letter of Friday. I am so sorry this wretched paper worries you so, and I will be sure to number the pages in future. Please forgive me for not having done so already. Most modern note-paper *is* folded and stamped with whatever device it bears, like this paper: but I have always told them *not* to do it with mine, only this time I forgot.

I am glad you liked the little cutting about the musk-rat. I hoped you would. But I did not know he was an old friend of yours. You need not worry yourself thinking the censor keeps back some of your letters to me. The censors have nothing to do with letters *to* members of the Expeditionary Force, only with letters *from* them. *No* incoming letters from England are submitted to the censors: the moment they reach the post office, they are given out, and no censor even sees the outsides of them. But letters to chaplains if incorrectly addressed, all go sooner or later to the principal chaplain's office, to be re-addressed.

But your letters are all correctly addressed now; and they come in very reasonably quick time.

I had a talk with our Colonel to-day, which I very rarely have. We discussed the prospects of the war. He is sanguine and thinks Germany is done for. Certainly both we and the French are pushing her as she has not been pushed for many months. I have always said the same thing — there might at any moment come a sudden collapse of Germany, and of course Italy's adhesion (which is now certain) might induce that collapse.

On the other hand, if we want to "*fight to a finish*," *i.e.*, till Germany is "wiped out" — then the war might last for years! For *every* German would fight to death rather than submit to that. I do not, however, believe that we shall really fight to a finish. We shall be content to go on till Germany asks for peace. She will have to get out of Belgium and France, and have to give up Alsace and Lorraine. Austria will lose most.

I heard a most astonishing thing yesterday — that many of the French monarchists want to offer the throne of this country to King Albert of Belgium! It only shows how little they think of the Bonapartist and Orleanist pretenders. To me it seems the wildest dream.

In Alison I have just been reading the marvellous and horribly tragic story of the Peasant War in La Vendée against the Revolution: of absorbing, though very melancholy interest. If England had kept her word and sent help to the Vendeans the Revolution would have been smashed and the monarchy restored, whereas we let a million heroic peasants be butchered.

Tuesday Night, May 18, 1915

I HAVE been hard at work the whole day in the hospital, and am so tired and so sleepy that I am only going to wish you good night.

In the afternoon I met Lady Austin-Lee and the Duchess of Bassano in the hospital: I didn't leave the hospital till seven, and then went for a short stroll in the town for air and exercise. Then I came in, dined, and wrote a sheaf of letters to mothers of badly wounded men. It is a work of great necessity and charity, but takes much time. I cannot write the poor things short and dry letters, but *must* try to cheer and comfort them. Many are the sons of widows, or grandsons of old widowed women who have brought them up, and one knows how — at best — a letter telling of severe wounds must be grievous.

I am *much* better: the inflammation of the alveolus almost entirely gone, and the laryngitis *quite* gone.

The rhododendrons here are getting more splendid every day. I'm half asleep! So good night.

Friday Night, 9 P.M., *May* 21, 1915

THIS morning, after Mass at the hospital at seven, I came back here, breakfasted, and worked hard at letters all morning. All afternoon I worked in the hospital, and then came home to tea. After which I felt I *must* have a walk, and went off to the park where I had not been for ages. I found the trees much more leafy and the chestnuts, of which there are very many, all banks of white and pink, or red blossom.

Instead of taking the Trianon side of the park, I went in by the Basin of Neptune, and down by the Basin of Ceres, to the Tapis Vert (the long strip of lawn leading down, between avenues, from the great façade of the palace toward the large Basin of Apollo, beyond which is the Grand Canal). Numbers of soldiers (French), in canoes, were disporting themselves upon the water, and seemed very cheerful, taking great delight in splashing one another's boats unmercifully with their oars. . . . But the mosquitoes were *owdacious*. (It is a heavy,

hot day.) I walked as far as the star I have marked on the card and there sat down on a bench and talked to a French artilleryman, who has been in England and seems very proud of it. The Ménagerie, opposite the Grand Trianon, was really a Ménagerie in Louis XIV's time, but is now some sort of barracks.

St. Cyr was where Madame de Maintenon established her Institution for daughters of poor nobles, where she spent all the time she could spare from her royal husband. Toward the end of her thirty-two years of being his wife without being his Queen, she seems to have grown very weary of her palace life, and glad to get away from it. After the Revolution St. Cyr became a military school, like Woolwich (and it is so still), and there Napoleon I received his later training as a soldier, I think.

Yesterday afternoon I had to attend the funeral of an English officer, an aviator killed by a fall of the machine. Not a Catholic, so I did not officiate. It was a longish march to the cemetery, through the whole length of the town, much over two miles. The Mayor of Versailles, and a number of French officers, and perhaps one hundred French soldiers attended, and it was a fine, though simple sight. The French along the streets showed all possible sympathy and respect. The cemetery on the fringe of the town, on a hillside, running up into a long wood, is very peaceful and beautiful.

There were over a hundred new English graves, all of soldiers, and we noticed that every one was carefully tended by the French, with flowers growing and in wreaths, and also pretty little shrubs put to grow on them. I thought this very kindly and tender toward strangers, none of whose friends could ever be expected to thank those who showed this kindness to the poor foreigners. The French have much more *heart* and sweetness than English people give them credit for.

Besides my French soldier friends I have troops of little French friends among the children, who waylay

me to demand medals and tiny crucifixes to send to their fathers at the front. They are dear little creatures, and it always touches me to hear their prattling talk about the fathers they are so likely never to see again till they meet in heaven. And it touches me close to see the trust and confidence in their innocent grave eyes. They always speak of a little crucifix as a "little Christ." "Oh, please," they beg, "give me a little Christ to send to my father at the war. He is in the trenches," or, "he comes from being wounded." The dear French soldiers, as they pass by, watch us with gentle smiles. If I should live to be very old I should never forget these wonderful months in France, and all the great love it has taught me for our valiant and sweet-hearted neighbours. It is only these things that salve at all for me the pain of this long absence from you.

I am glad you are reading "The Newcomes;" I love Colonel Newcome till he turns against Ethel; then I long to box his foolish old ears. Thackeray admired Master Clive much better than I do, which is natural, as he thought he was drawing his own portrait as a youth, and I do not blindly admire Thackeray. His great genius was half cruel and he loved to smell out human meannesses and falsenesses. As you say, the book is terribly long-drawn, and it shows signs of a great genius tired and jaded. Still the genius is there, and there are exquisitely beautiful and tender things in it.

To-night at my dinner, just for a rest, I read a few pages of David Copperfield: and it *was* a rest. Always talking or reading a foreign language is a sort of strain on the attention, and the only English I have been reading is Alison, whose theme is intensely interesting but who is not himself very light.

Now I'm off to bed.

Saturday Night, May 22, 1915

It is ten o'clock — bedtime — and I am not going to attempt a long letter: perhaps I shall finish this early to-morrow morning, before going to the hospital for Mass.

Your letter of Wednesday arrived this morning about midday, just as I was starting for Paris to see C.; and I read it in the train.

I do not quite twig what is happening on your side of the water about the Cabinet. I read a French evening paper coming back from Paris in the train, and it spoke of all sorts of changes in the Ministry, as if Mr. Asquith and Lord Kitchener were both going. I am much flattered by your estimate of my opinion concerning the war: but I know nothing. Italy is now certain: and her adhesion *may* make an enormous difference. Unless Russia takes a bad knock on the eastern front, Austria and Germany *cannot* afford the vast depletion of forces necessary to turn a strong face against Italy: if Germany sends many men south from the western front, France or we, or both of us, are likely to break through. If a large force were sent south from the eastern front Russia would break through. You will see that the ultra-bitterness of Germany against *us* will now be turned against Italy, and much more reasonably, for we were not Germany's ally and Italy was.

Germany is now treating America so carelessly that I believe she *wants* the United States to declare war; then, with Italy also against her, she *may* perhaps say, "We can't fight against the whole world," and begin to hold out peace overtures. If, however, the Allies ask *too much*, she will go on fighting. I don't believe for a moment that the Emperor William is unpopular in Germany, or even less popular than he was before the war.

I heard to-day an extraordinary (and quite authentic)

instance of the way in which Germany has prepared everything for this war even in foreign countries:

A French general, long ago in the early part of the war, pursued by a German force too strong to engage, came to a river (in France, mind, this was) and crossed it by the bridge, which he then immediately blew up and continued his march. Close to the other side of the destroyed bridge was a factory: and, arrived at the river-bank, the Germans simply went to the factory and brought out of it a metal bridge, all ready, made in compartments, and threw it across: it was exactly the width, etc., of the destroyed stone bridge, and had been duly prepared by the Germans for such a need, and kept ready under lock and key!

Now I'm for bed. So God bless you, dearest, and keep you safe and well. I shall give you no more bulletins of *my* health, as I am all right again.

Wednesday, May 26, 1915

Your letter written on Sunday has just come and I am going to write a short answer.

I do hate hot weather and it always does knock all the life out of me.

I feel very pleasant sitting still reading in my room (it is *beautifully cool*) but when I have to go out and bustle round it is very different. Unfortunately, they assure me that the warm weather will go on now till autumn!

Yesterday I worked in the hospital all morning and afternoon, then came in and had tea: then went for an evening stroll in the park, where I met again a young Artillery-man whom I had met before, and we sat under the trees by the Grand Canal and chatted. He is very well-educated (a clerk, I should say, in some business house) and quite a gentleman — fearfully anti-Republican — and, poor lad, just off to the front. Another Artillery-man — also a gentleman — joined us, whom I knew

before, a young sculptor, and as they were both Parisians and talk lovely French, it was good practice for me.

Then I came home and dined; and read and (dog-tired) slunk into bed.

O dear! I wish it was always winter! I am worth triple in cold or cool weather. All my energies melt away in hot weather, and everyone else seems so delighted and says, "Is it not a delicious weather?" and I long to smack them!

I'm glad their Reverences from Salisbury came to look you up: and that Father Cashman was to bring you Holy Communion.

My mouth is *quite* all right now, but I can't face the dentist again just yet: though two teeth seriously demand removal.

How I laughed when I read your saying, "The new scissors are so good and sharp, I shall lock them up." I am sure that one of these days you will start locking up your food directly they bring it you, and you will then die of starvation.

Now good-bye.

Thursday, May 27, 1915

Your long and interesting letter, with the romance of your Aunt Sally, arrived this morning: I think some day *I* might try my hand on the story. Of course I've often heard you and Christie talk of Aunt Sally, but you never told me this romance of her poor life before.

The nights have been so hot that I have had very little sleep, but to-day began cooler, and even now is less hot than we have been having it. The worst of it is, I can't induce the French people to say that it is only a temporary wave of heat, and that we shall have cool weather presently. On the contrary, when I ask when it will be cooler, they say "At the end of August — a little." But I think that is *blague:* they imagine we get no hot weather in England, and so they want to brag

of their own; they all think rain and cool weather is a thing to be ashamed of, and pretend to know nothing about it. And the Versaillais are just as touchy about their climate as Mr. Wodehouse used to be about that of Plymouth: any complaints about the weather they consider a personal reflection and resent fiercely. Yesterday I told the Director of the Bank of France, where I get my cheques cashed, that I found Versailles relaxing, and I thought he would have assaulted me! "Versailles relaxing! It is well known that Versailles is the healthiest town in France. A climate without parallel. Relaxing! Why, Monseigneur, are you not aware that at this moment you are standing on a higher level than the pinnacles of Notre Dame in Paris! Relaxing! Why, it is for coolness that the Parisiens come here. . . . Pray, Monseigneur, do not say that Versailles is relaxing: for you are not the one to state an impossibility. . . ." I really was afraid he would cash no more cheques for me, and hurriedly ate my words, averring that no doubt when I understood it better I should know that Versailles was as bracing as the North Pole.

Yesterday I went to Paris at midday and stayed at the Salpêtrière with F. till five, and really I thought Paris, though very hot, was drier and airier: but that it would be high treason to say here. The whole mischief is that the air of Versailles is very moist from the immense number of trees: and moist heat is more trying to me than dry. I have always preached the unhealthiness of trees.

If I don't shut up, this letter can't catch the post.

May 28, 1915

I PUT off writing till this morning, and then a convoy of wounded arrived -- the first for ever so long, and I had to go and attend to my duties instead of writing letters. It is not a very big batch, but over three hun-

dred, and they are all from that eternal Ypres: as a matter of fact, very few Catholics among them; but still in order to find out whether they are Catholics or not, one has to see them all.

As I told you, I am out of sorts, and it makes me uncommonly slack and lazy. All the rain we have does not *cool* the air; it only surcharges it with moisture and makes it heavy and oppressive. I'm not a bit hot sitting in my room, but when I try to do anything I feel that "the grass-hopper is a burden." Fortunately, there has been uncommon little to do, and I have been able to take it just as easily as I chose.

My soldier-servant confesses that he pocketed letters to you twice and forgot them: I "washed his head for him," as they say here, and he won't do it again. He is *really* good, as good a man as I ever met: but he has a rotten memory (like my own) and being in love makes his worse. He is quite truthful and would never pretend he *hadn't* forgotten when he had: that's one good thing. He eats like a lion (four lions) and is as thin as a ruler — the flat sort.

Your letter of Tuesday came this morning. Poor old Pierce! I'm sure he needn't be apologising to himself or anyone else for not coming to Europe to fight. All the *wrong* people have scruples about it: there are two or three millions in Great Britain who could and should come, but they stick at home, and let married men and only sons and widows' sons come. Lots of the wounded we get here are quite old fellows.

The handkerchief case has arrived, and if I had been all right I should have gone to Paris with it this afternoon; but I'm too washed out. It is most *beautifully* made and I'm sure Lady Austin-Lee will be delighted with it. Thank you *ever so much* for making it.

I have got hold of Trollope's "Is he a Popinjay?" and it is quite a treat after reading nothing but history and French for a long time, though it is not one of his first-

rank books — about on a par with "He Knew he was Right," though less depressing.

You need not bother to send those magazines at present.

I suffer rather from French priests who write books and *will* want me to read them: this sort of thing, "Bombs and the Catholic Church" "Asphyxiating Gases and the Revival of Religion in France." They always assure me that they give me full leave to translate their masterpieces into English. "God forbid," I say inwardly: but it isn't so easy to know what to say outwardly.

There is Mme. Beranek to bid me go down to dinner. This has been a ramshackle letter, but I feel ramshackle, like a very badly made rag doll recently rescued from drowning in a bucket of tepid slops.

So I will say good-night and God bless you.

Sunday Night, Quarter to bedtime

I AM beginning a letter feeling very sleepy, and most likely shall leave it to finish in the morning.

Monday, May 31, 1915

I ONLY got so far and caved in, and went to bed! Not that I was feeling *tired*, only sleepy. Since the cool weather came back the feeling of tiredness is gradually going off. To-day it is even cooler than yesterday, making four cool days in a row.

Yesterday I did not go to Paris to see F., who is, I believe, coming here instead to-day. But after my letter to you I went for a walk in the Little Trianon (*i.e.*, just about the time all France is at luncheon) and there was only one other person there — a young French soldier sketching. The azaleas are still in bloom, though going off: and I stole some good slips which my landlord says he can make grow for me. It was all very lovely and peaceful. As I was leaving to come home to my

own luncheon *thousands* were pouring in. After luncheon I went to a Kermesse right at the other end of the town, organised by a Comtesse Missiessy for the poor Belgians. She had asked me to come, and was evidently extremely pleased and grateful that I did. She is quite charming, of Mrs. Drummond's type, about the same age, with the same brilliant complexion, abundant white and grey hair, intensely blue eyes, and gracious, friendly manners. Only she is not nearly so tall as Mrs. Drummond. She has a charming son, also, whom I took a great fancy to. I bought a lot of things to send to my French soldiers at the front.

Then I hurried back to the hospital for an evening service where I had a crowded congregation of two.

In my letter to-morrow I shall send a whole batch of portrait-cards: these really are very interesting, and especially to anyone who reads much French history, as I do. It is only quite recently one could get reproductions of these famous portraits, which are nearly all of them in the palace here.

Fifty times I have meant to ask you about clothes — summer is on us and you *must* be needing some replenishments: do please tell me frankly what.

I propose a light silk dress — you have only the very pretty but now old, lavender one — something of that type: I should say two, a *tussore*-coloured one, and a lavender, grey-blue, or lilac. But tell me about *etceteras*, millinery, veils, etc., that you want.

Another batch of wounded has, my servant tells me, just arrived at the hospital, and I must go round there.

With best love to Christie.

Monday Night, May 31, 1915

Your cheery letter of Friday arrived this morning enclosing one from Alice, to whom I duly sent by this post the portrait of Colonel Drew. The same post

brought me *Tit-Bits* (which you so much objected to forward to me!) from which I see they have awarded me a prize of fifty pounds! What for, do you think? For the following: One had to choose any word out of the current number of *Tit-Bits*, and then give three other words bearing on it, the first and last of which three words must begin with a letter found in the word chosen: I chose "dollars" and made "Don't preclude dolours." Doesn't it seem ridiculous to earn fifty pounds for such appalling rubbish? All the same, fifty pounds is uncommonly useful. You see I can very well afford you some new duds!

I always felt sure I should gain one of these prizes. Ver will be very jealous: I think he never won more than 2/6!

I will show your flower to M. Beranek, and ask him if he knows what it is.

I had a very gushing letter to-day from Mrs. W., but written just like a housemaid's letter: no pronouns, this sort of thing — "Thought I'd write. So glad get your photo. Very good, too. Hadn't time say good-bye to Mrs. Brent 'fore leaving," etc.

Do you remember hearing me talk of my young brother officer, Captain H.? He has gone home with measles and I think he is delighted!

When I was in Paris on Friday with F. we were driving in the Bois de Boulogne and there was a German "taube" miles up in the air, hotly pursued by two French aëroplanes that drove it away very promptly. The French don't get in the least excited by such trifles, only all the smart people were getting cricks in their necks from staring up at the chase.

F. and I are lunching with Lady Austin-Lee on Thursday.

I suppose the little "tapis" (mats) are arrived by now. I am always jeering at my French friends for the *poverty* of their language (their great boast is its richness).

"You call a carpet, 'tapis,' and a table-cloth, 'tapis,' and a mat, 'tapis.'"

Of course I don't believe London is going to be blown up, or the Tube railway. But —— lives for sensations, and nothing else will stimulate his "brain."

I am not at all likely to be *offered* leave, and do not think it would be wise to ask for it. Besides it could only be for six days or so, and they would have to put someone else here. So large a hospital could not be left without a chaplain; and whoever got in would be sure to want to stop in. Versailles suits me down to the ground, and I could never get into such good and economical quarters elsewhere. "*La vie coûte chère*" in France everywhere at present.

I took you to Paris in miniature yesterday and *everyone* was enchanted with the portrait; only they were rude enough to you to say that I am the image of you.

Last night, coming home in the train, I read a small but very important paragraph in the *Liberté:* it said that rumours were being spread that the Pope is moving the European Powers to convene a conference, with himself as president, arbiter or umpire, for the purpose of trying to re-establish Peace.

The importance is this — the report is said to be spread by Germany and Austria: if so, it means that they are looking about to find a way out of the war, and to "save their face" at the same time. I believe this to be fully possible. Italy has come in against them: America will break off diplomatic relations very soon now: Roumania is on the point of coming in. Well, Austria and Germany may very probably not want to wait for that: Austria, at least, knows that for every State that comes in against her she will lose a big slice of her empire; and both Germany and Austria would much rather that the plea for Peace came from the Pope than from them. So I do *not* think this rumour an obvious *canard.*

Certainly our entering on the war with the tiny army

we then had was a marvel of pluck. No wonder the Emperor William thought us foolhardy. He knew our numbers very well, and he probably knew also that the French army was unready. He has learned a lot since. That England can *make* an army, and that France can mend her faults, and get her army into trim.

About Sir J. F. and Sir H. Smith-Dorrien I will not talk, because I never do talk about things of which I know nothing. Those sorts of rumours do great harm and the vulgar love to gobble them.

Of course, though I see no good at all in going home for a few days, I want to be at home: I am not tired of France, but I miss my home every day and all day long.

Honestly, I think the complete change and rest of a sort (rest from literary production) will have added years to my life, and given me, when I can work at writing again, a new lease of literary power. I *know* I was getting *stale*, and my memory and fancy have been re-stored with an immense treasure-house of new ideas, new characters, and new scenery.

Now I will bring this long letter to a close.

It is still pouring, but the storm rumbles in the far distance.

I am truly delighted to think you are going to have Alice again, even if only for a bit.

Best love to Christie.

Wednesday Night, June 2, 1915

I HAVE just finished my solitary dinner, and now I am going to chat with you — all about nothing in particular, because there is nothing in particular to tell you.

Apart from the fact that my going to see F. is a great kindness to him — he is very young for his twenty-three years, and finds himself very lonely in the huge Paris hospital — it makes a great change and relief for myself. The work at the hospital here, though interesting and

important and useful, is monotonous, and often very sad, to one whose heart has always been too soft; and I have no friend here at all. I am truly attached to the poor wounded soldiers, but even they are forever on the move; the men who came last week are gone this, and it is a ceaseless beginning again with strangers. . . . Well, all this being so, I find it an immense rest and relief to my mind and spirits to go and pass some hours with my dear godson: and of course it makes it much nicer to feel that my going sets a little island of happiness in his big sea of loneliness. I said to him yesterday, "Why did you choose me, an old man and a foreigner, for your friend?" "I did not choose you," he answered quietly. "God sent you to me very kindly in my great solitude. But you are not old: nor will you ever be. Nor are you a foreigner: your land is mine now, and mine yours.". . .

I regret to say it is getting hot again: but after six cool days one is fresher for it: and, besides, the six cool days cheered me up by showing that one need not really expect months of unbroken heat, but that there will be little refreshing gaps. Also I am very well, and the cool days have taken away the tired feeling.

I hope you will have liked the little series of brown portraits I sent you a day or two ago. They are interesting and not common. The portraits of the Comte de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII) and of the Comte d'Artois (Charles X) are charming, and so different from the well-known portraits of them as elderly, heavy-faced kings. They were both of them younger brothers of poor Louis XVI — uncles of the little Dauphin called Louis XVII. But the *most* charming is the portrait of the Duc d'Enghien as a boy: whom later on Napoleon I caused to be shot — the great crime, as it was the great blunder, of his reign: which his mother and Josephine begged him in tears not to commit.

Your letters seem to show that instead of growing older you are growing younger, both in the handwriting

and in the stuff! . . . Now I'm going to bed. So God bless you and send you only happy dreams.

Friday Evening, June 4, 1915

I DID not write this morning, because, for some reason, I was told there would be no mail to England. But I am writing now to have a letter ready for to-morrow's post.

Your letters of Monday and Tuesday came yesterday and to-day.

If Mr. Bonaparte Stubbs was a grandson of Jerome Bonaparte he must have been so through Jerome's first wife, an American called Patterson, whom Napoleon I made him divorce, after which he married a daughter of the King of Würtemberg, and became himself King of Westphalia. He was extremely handsome, and very popular, though the most dissipated of all the Bonapartes — in fact Lucien and Joseph were not dissipated at all. He was by far the youngest of the Imperial family and only died in 1860, and I cannot quite understand his *grandson* being old enough to marry in those far-away days of which you speak. Have you King Jerome's portrait?

I send another sheaf of Napoleon portraits, some quite new to me and very interesting. The three marked with an O are, I think, glorious: the beauty of the face so refined and noble.

Portraits of Eugène Beauharnais are not common. He was much nicer than any of Napoleon's own family and much more loyally devoted to him. He married the King of Bavaria's daughter and they were very happy, though she had hated being forced to accept him.

After a very hot day it is a lovely evening with salmon-coloured mountains, that no Alpinist will ever climb, hanging in a turquoise, green-blue sky. After coming in from the hospital for tea I resolved to forego a walk in

the park and tackle neglected correspondence — which I have been doing, seated in one of my open windows whither I have dragged my table. Some French soldiers are working in the garden. They never seem to make their geranium-coloured trousers dirty!

Yesterday I went to see C. in Paris, and we again went on the lake in the Bois, and landed on a pretty island where we had tea. There was an "artist" painting, near a brake of rhododendrons. F. insisted on our going to peep . . . you never saw such an appalling mass of garish, absurd colours, and no likeness to anything in heaven above, or the earth beneath. I fancy he would consider himself an "impressionist," and he certainly conveyed a strong impression of knowing worse than nothing about painting.

They say my dinner is ready, and after it I shall go to bed early — it is 8.30 now; for last night I wrote letters till two in the morning, and have been very sleepy all day.

Good-night, my dearest darling, and know that many times every hour I think of you, and beg Our Lord to fill my place at your side while I am away, and of His Mother to have you ever in her sweet and tender prayers.

At Mass I pray above all for you; and at every grace before and after meals.

Monday, 10 A.M., *June* 7, 1915

THE letter you ask about duly arrived, and also the miniature, which travelled in perfect safety and without undue fatigue. You look quite at home on my wall here.

I send another batch of portrait-cards, including a couple of bad hats. . . .

I had a funeral this morning at seven o'clock, so had to be up early; I was glad they fixed it for that early hour . . . for the heat is *blazing*. Saturday, yesterday, and to-day have all been hot, but each *much* hotter than the day before. All the same I have not suffered from

it, which shows that I am all right in health: I suffered so much before because I was run down and weak.

The procession at the convent yesterday afternoon was very pretty and touching: the park lovely. There were crowds of wounded French soldiers, and some of ours. Everyone, on coming away, received one of these little prayers and medals, so I send you mine.

This is a mere scrap of a letter, but I want to get round to the hospital and put in a good day's work.

Tuesday, 7 A.M., *June* 8, 1915

I WONDER if *chez vous* the heat is as amazing as it is here: if so I trust that you have at least a breeze to freshen it. It is regular *volcanic* heat, and I am sure there has been a huge volcanic dislocation somewhere: all Saturday, Sunday, and Monday the air was filled with a sort of haze that might be volcanic dust. All the same I do not feel this burst of heat (which is much worse) as I felt the last.

Yesterday was a quiet day and I was at work all the time in the hospital, where it was really cooler than outside; so virtue was its own reward. A lot of the men were going off to England late at night and I had good-byes to say; the men are always going and coming here.

I often praise French things to you, but one thing they *don't* understand, and that is ink! I have never got hold of a decent ink here. It is always *dirty* a few days after you begin using it, clogging the pen, and besides its colour is very poor, seldom really black, but a poor brown. Nor is their stationery as good as ours; in fact all the best comes from England.

This is a miserable apology for a letter: but yesterday I saw no one (except the patients) and my brain is reduced to melted butter by the heat. I sleep with two windows and two doors wide open, but *still* it is too hot with one thin cotton blanket and a sheet.

I'm glad the anecdote about the Editor and Editress made you cackle. Here is another (different) anecdote, which made F. laugh.

A dear little boy of ten or so was bothering me a few days ago to give him a medal.

"No," I said, "don't be greedy. I have given you one."

"Then a little cross."

"No. I gave you one three weeks ago."

"Oh, but this time it is for my father, he is at home. He has come home badly wounded . . . a little cross for him."

"No. But I am glad he is badly wounded. . . ."

"Glad, Monseigneur!!"

"Yes, very. He is very lucky to be badly wounded! Last time you mentioned him he had been *killed at the battle of the Marne nine months ago*. . . ."

Tableau: but boy quite undefeated.

Tuesday Evening, June 8, 1915

No mail to-day, so I got no letter from you. Almost every day I do get one: you are quite splendid about writing.

To-day has had three climates! It began intolerably hot: about eleven turned cloudy, windy, and comparatively cool; about two got hotter than ever; and about seven turned completely cool again! And the French have the "neck," as soldiers call it, to talk of the inconsistency of *our* climate.

To-morrow F. and I lunch with Lady Austin-Lee, and go on to tea with the Duchess of Bassano, with whom also we lunch on Saturday.

I forgot to thank you for sending the slip about old Lady C. I can't honestly say that I think the world will lose anything by her leaving it: nor do I think that

she was at all good-natured, if you mean amiable; on the contrary, she was full of spite.

Our old friend Miss Charlton (who only knew her by hearsay) once said a very true thing about her: "If she had only been of shaky morality she would have been forgiven: but she was bad form as well." And so she was — appalling. She would say things so indecent that a footman would have been ashamed to utter them to another footman. I certainly never did, or could, repeat them to you: and indeed I have always been rather ashamed of my visit to ——.

Our hospital is three-quarters empty for the moment, we sent so many to England to-day; but no doubt it will fill up again all too soon.

I wonder if you are having this stewing weather? I hope not, for it is enough to knock the strongest person up. Personally, I feel like a stewed rabbit.

Even since I began this letter (I have dined since) the weather has changed *again*, and it is stifling. One hour I have to wear my thick Norfolk jacket with a waistcoat, the next a thin alpaca coat and — Monsignor under it. The alpaca coat was in rags, but the French are splendid menders and it is as good as new. I send my socks (with holes as big as five-shilling bits in them) and they come back quite new!

Though I grumble so about the heat (which is really as bad as Malta) I don't feel it *badly* this time. That is, it does not knock me over or make me feel weary — only healthily cross. F., who doesn't know what "cross" means, is extremely puzzled; when I am in a bad humour, he looks at me with gentle, troubled eyes, like a dog whom one has told to "get out." I am really so ashamed that it is teaching me to be less cross. It is a wonderful gift, that gentle sweetness of disposition.

I am all of your opinion as to Pendennis — an intolerable prig. (The rain is coming down in buckets, *Dieu merci*.) Laura was much too good for him — indeed

the best of Thackeray's heroines, most of whom are nincompoops. Still Thackeray is always worth reading and I'm glad you are doing it. . . .

There is one very nice officer (doctor) here called Chavasse, whom I knew up at the front, and I am so troubled about him: he cut his finger deeply the other day while operating on a gangrene case, and he went straight and had the flesh of the finger cut out, but it is not in a good way. Say a prayer for him.

Now I'm going to my bed, and so good-night, and may "sweet dreams attend you" as young Agnes Meredith used to say to me. . . .

Well, once more, good-night.

Thursday Afternoon, 4.30, *June* 10, 1915

YOUR letter of Monday only arrived to-day, on the third day; one or two recent ones have arrived on the second day, but perhaps they caught the midday post, and this last letter only caught the evening post.

It is only 4.30, but I have no intention of going out again: there is a thunder-storm going on, very black sky, with tall grey clouds standing slowly across it, tons of rain falling; the lightning mostly rather distant.

So I shall stop here in my room, and write letters at my window, while the garden outside gulps down the rain.

To go back to yesterday: at twelve I caught the electric railway to Paris and, lo, there was another big thunder-storm going on. (I should think the Eiffel Tower is Lightning Conductor enough for all Paris.)

The rain had stopped when I reached the station called Pont de l'Alma, where F. was waiting for me. It is on the left bank of the Seine, and Lady Austin-Lee's house is in the Avenue du Trocadero, just on the side; so we crossed the bridge, and as soon as we got to the other side it came down again in torrents, and we had to get into

a taxi — to go about a hundred yards! It was a very pleasant luncheon-party, though Sir Henry, whom I like immensely, was over in London. We were six; our hostess; a *very nice* American friend of hers, Comtesse d'Osmoy, about thirty or thirty-two; a young Englishman called Gunnis; a very nice Captain O'Conor, who talks French absolutely like a Frenchman; and F. and F.!

Let us hope *this* thunder-storm, the longest and best we have had, will really cool us down again. Do you remember how I used to be upset by thunder-storms? They made me quite ill and utterly miserable. I'm glad to say that has quite gone, and I am no longer upset by them.

That MS., "The Sacristans," that you sent to me, I administered to the *Catholic World* of New York. . . .

I assure you I am quite delighted that you like these portraits, and a few years ago one could not have got them. If you have not already got your portrait album let me find you one here or in Paris, they are cheap and nice here. . . .

Yes, Josephine was sacrificed to Napoleon's ambition: but it is fair to remember that she had never cared much about him, and she was the only human being he ever loved. During his earlier wars he was writing to her almost incessantly, and always thinking of her, while she was thinking of nothing but dress, gaieties, and gallantries. He forgave her: but ever afterwards he had a sort of cynical tolerance for her. Also, it is fair to remember that their marriage was no marriage at all in the religious sense — a mere civil contract during the "Convention," when religious marriage was not the fashion. And I do not think it was at all the loss of *him* that Josephine minded, but the loss of her seat on his throne. She did not do badly: he secured to her her title of Empress and £100,000 a year pin-money, with a splendid palace.

The French (all except the Imperial family, who had always detested her) disliked the divorce, because they have always hated Austria, and the new Empress, Marie Louise, was niece of Marie Antoinette: also because they all thought Josephine was the Emperor's *porte-bonheur* or mascot, as we call it — a word never used by the French. And certainly Marie Louise was as void of "charm" as Josephine was full of it.

This afternoon I went for a stroll in the Little Trianon where it was cool and shady; I have had much less time lately for these walks, but going less often makes them all the fresher, as each time one sees changes in trees, flowers, and shrubs. There were hardly any people there, and it was very quiet and peaceful. The lilacs, azaleas, rhododendrons all out in blossom; the swans on the lakes have all got a couple of little swanlets, white as yet, to grow into ugly grey cygnets later on.

The birds, which used to be all singing when I came, keep quiet now, busied about household matters; like other matrons, they lay aside their youthful accomplishments when they have a nursery to think of.

I saw some very small fly-catchers tackling very large butterflies.

With best love to Christie and Alice.

Thursday Evening, June 17, 1915

I AM only *beginning* this letter now, because F. is in the room, at present very quiet (arranging medals I have given him to give away again), but how long he will remain quiet I do not know! If I *told* him to stay quiet he would be as obedient as a little dog. But I do not want to try his patience too far.

I must explain that we have *very few* patients, and so I am enjoying a sort of short holiday.

F. came to luncheon, and afterwards we drove — a most charming drive — to Marly, St. Germain, Main-

tenon, etc. I cannot say how much I enjoyed it, or how much good it did me. It "changed my mind," and it is always a delight to me to find myself in the real country. Versailles is charming, and the parks glorious, but it is far from being country.

We drove first through a part of the Versailles park, then got at once into real but very richly cultivated country, with a few charming, old-fashioned villages. Then by the very pretty, rustic, and richly-wooded estate of Maintenon, bought by the "Widow Scarron," which (being an old feudal property) gave her the title of Marquise — the only one she ever held. For, being the King's wife, she would accept no title but that of Queen from him, and that one he swore to the Archbishop of Paris, on the night of his marriage, never to accord to her.

Maintenon is very calm and sweet, and I wonder if the poor lady, during her thirty-two years of unqueened wifehood to the most selfish old man on earth, ever wished she were simply Marquise de Maintenon and nothing more.

Then we got into the Marly forest, and soon reached Marly village. The château and wonderful gardens built and laid out by Louis XIV are all gone. But it is still a fascinating place, with quaint, but lively old streets winding down very steep hills, with marvellous views of the wide champagne-country, like a wide sea.

Then we came to St. Germain, a sort of ancient Windsor, all clustered round the splendid château, much older of course than the château here, dating in fact from François I: one side right on the town, the other on the park with immense views. . . . In the church (of the town, just opposite the castle, not the castle chapel) I visited the original tomb of James II, who died in the château. Afterwards his body was removed to the chapel of the Irish College in Paris.

Then we drove home by another road, by the Seine,

very pretty, but less country and *empty* than the way we went by. So home here to tea.

I should never have been happy without seeing St. Germain, and it is hard to get at from here by train. So I saw it very pleasantly, in a comfortable motor, and on a lovely day of sun and breeze.

You know that Louis XIII and Louis XIV had always made St. Germain their country-house, till the latter built Versailles; he never went back there, and gave it to the English royal family with a very noble pension sufficient to enable them to maintain their court there. Louis XIV never neglected them, but treated them always with affectionate attention and respect, never during all those years omitting to go and visit them twice each week. I am no fervent admirer of the Roi Soleil, but he was really a gentleman in his treatment of his brother king in adversity.

Well, my dear, there is no more to tell you.

It has been a pleasant, happy day; but very simple and quiet.

I wished that I had a camera, there were so many picturesque groups of French soldiers along the road, such as no one ever dreams of photographing.

Ah, dear! You ask me when I shall come home? Perhaps you think, sometimes, that I am so comfortable here that I do not much mind how long I may have to stop. But the truth is, I dare scarcely think of the day of release, and the real going home, for the home-sickness it gives me. . . . Yes, it is funny your having to receive your news of Winterbourne village from France. . . .

7 P.M., *June* 18, 1915

I CAME in a couple of hours ago and found a letter from Madame Gorsse, the poor mother of the young soldier I told you of. I only met him once, but spent long hours with him, and persuaded him to go to con-

fession. Neither she nor I had any news of him since May 8th, and I felt sure he was killed: she hoped he might *only* be wounded, or a prisoner. Now she sends me his last letter, written as he was dying, and entrusted to a comrade. It is terribly pathetic: but the lad had his senses to the end, and wrote in full consciousness of his approaching death: quite a long letter, full of tenderness and love, and thought for her. Is it not touching and wonderful that I, a stranger and foreigner who never saw her, should be brought thus to share in her grief, and be made *by her* a partner in it? Her own letter is quite heart-broken, and to answer it has been a terrible trial: I had to answer at once or I could not have done it at all. Poor woman, she has one consolation that comes of her own charity, which never fails to bring us help . . . poor widow as she was, she adopted a little orphan girl, and now she says the tenderness and love of this girl is beyond all price. Now, dear, I will talk of things not sad, but I had to tell you; I know your prayers will go up to Our Lord for this desolate widow.

When I came in it was from visiting old General de Chalain, who lives far away at the other end of Versailles. I had owed him a visit a long while. He was in, and kept me waiting while he tidied up. So I studied the drawing-room. There are plenty of good old pictures, some good miniatures, a few bits of fine and beautiful old furniture, but the whole room a howling wilderness! Very few French people understand how to make a room look human; they have hardly any taste that way, and often they do not *inhabit* their best rooms.

He is a good old fellow, very pious and courteous, and I like him. The ladies never show . . . his sons are at the front, and seem to have as many legs as centipedes to judge by the number he reports them as having recently lost each time I see him. Also he has tons of nephews who get killed repeatedly — again to judge by the way he represents half a dozen as having been killed

since my last visit. But he seems quite as much upset, and more, by the bursting of a water-pipe in the hall "yesterday"; it had burst "the day before yesterday" when last I was there.

The aviator Warneforde, who destroyed the German Zeppelin the other day, and got the V. C. direct from the King, was killed here last night while giving a display of aviation. They say he was very careless.

I got your letter of Tuesday this morning, and it is always a delight to me to get any of them.

I hope the cooler weather we are having has visited you, too. I am quite warmly clad this evening, and do not find it a bit too hot.

My room is full of roses, and so is the garden; the soldiers' red "pantalons" show up among the bushes, as they work, like gigantic masses of bloom! They are very good workers, and seem to enjoy it: I wonder what they think of all the while? Sometimes I ask, and they say, "*A la mort de Louis Seize*," which is the French phrase for "I'm not thinking of anything much."

As to my coming on leave I doubt if I could get it, and should (if I did) have to regularly *give up* this post first and wait till my "relief" arrived. At the end of leave I should probably be sent back to the front, which I should like and you wouldn't!

I am glad I gave you some new lights on the Empress Josephine: no one who has read his letters can doubt that her husband adored her — till he found out. He never loved anyone else, though he was always a most devoted, respectful son: and old Madame Mère, excellent as she was, was as hard as a tenpenny nail, a mine of sense, and a good woman, but not of the sort who care to be loved. Napoleon to the end stood between Josephine and his family, who all detested her — I mean, especially, the women. She had gracious and dignified manners, which they could never learn: and they were always indignant at having to carry her train,

on state occasions, etc. At her coronation, Pauline tried, in carrying it, to trip her up, and nearly succeeded!

I have some natural history notes to send, from another *Country Life*, but this letter is too fat for them. *I* am not fat at all, as thin as an eel: which enables me to skip about quicker. Lady Austin-Lee calls me the Boy Scout.

The French have a passion now for adopting parts of our uniform, and I live in terror of F. discarding his lovely pale, soft grey-blue uniform, for bilious, mustardy khaki, which will make him quite ghastly, with his colourless face.

I bought some brilliantine to soften my dry and rather stiff hair, but it made it canary colour, so I have had to present it to my servant: it took furious washings to get my hair white again. The other brilliantine they offered me was a Chartreuse-green, which I thought would be worse, though patriotic.

The man who cuts my hair adores the English, and *will* try to talk it: all he can say is "'Ow you do? Good-night."'

The Editor who used to lodge here calls repeatedly to ask Madame Beranek to give him three pieces of sugar: it must be a good deal of trouble, as he lives two miles away; but he has a sweet tooth and his wife allows him no pocket-money.

One of F.'s stories is as follows: long after his mother's death he demanded of his widower father a little brother to play with. "I don't keep them: it is Maman Rose" (the village *sage-femme*). "Where does she get them?" "Out of pumpkins."

So Master F. trots off down the village, but Maman Rose was out—conveying a pumpkin to some matron, no doubt. However her cottage was open, and sure enough, in her garden were lots of pumpkins, and F. brought a knife from the cottage and cut them all open. When he got home, deeply disappointed, he asked Baron C.:

"Must they be ripe?"

"Must what be ripe?"

"The pumpkins. I cut them all open, but there was no little brother in any of them."

It is ever so late and I must go to bed. So good-night and God bless you.

Saturday Night, June 19, 1915

YOUR letter of Thursday morning was in my hands at breakfast *this* morning, Saturday, only forty-eight hours after you were writing it. Excellent, eh? *My* letters are mostly written at night, and do not leave Versailles till the following night, so they must always seem longer on the way.

I knew you would be grieved to hear of my little French soldier's death, now, alas, placed beyond all doubt. He also is François, like myself. . . . I myself have no misgivings as to the lot of either of those martyr-lads for duty and for country. They are with the Martyrs' King and tender Master.

F. came in this afternoon and stayed to dinner (so I ate about three times what I do alone). He was very interesting; there is a harmonium in this room, and he played upon it old country songs of his far-away province — Franche-Comté — and crooned the old words of them: they are wonderfully tender, sweet and pathetic, with a perfect, simple pathos. I beg him to make a collection of them, music, words and all. The love songs of these peasants are as pure and white as the songs of little children: and the loveliest of all was a love-song of two old folks, grandparents, crooned to each other by the winter fire of the home whence children and grand-children have gone forth to the battle-field, to the altar, or to the church-yard rest. The highest heights of pathos are touched in words the simplest and most homely: no *sentiment*, only the everlasting realities of human life.

Do not think I have any melancholy fears or forebodings. I have none. I am *sure* that Our Lord will give us back to each other, and that we shall have long happy days together soon. . . . I am so glad that my little account of the Duchess of Bassano's many interesting possessions interested you, too. You will never grow old, for you will never lose your interest in the thousand things that make life so varied: whether they be the fringes on the lovely robe of spring and summer, winter and autumn, or the little links that make up the inner chain of history.

Is it not sickening to see the hypocrisy of the German Emperor, pretending to be hurt in his crooked soul at the deaths of the innocent women and children at Karlsruhe! God knows I pity them: but *he!* He, who has showered honours and decorations on men for doing nothing else but send to their death innocent women, and babies, and harmless village-folk, and helpless travellers! I knew he was a cad and a butcher, but I did not think he was a smug and barefaced hypocrite. . . .

Little Italy is doing finely, and I am delighted: her spirit is as good as anyone's and brings new and eager blood into our side.

I am off to bed: after the immense budget I sent you to-day, you can do with a shorter letter to-night.

Best love to Christie and Alice.

Sunday Evening, 8 P.M., *June* 20, 1915

HERE I am writing at my open window (there are two); it has been a delightful day, fresh, cool and vigorous though sunny and clear.

After luncheon F. and I went for another little excursion, and this time we took his godmother with us. It was not a very distant one, and did not take long in the motor, to Malmaison, the Empress Josephine's villa;

it really is not a palace in any sense, merely a good-sized country house. . . . The rooms are not by any means large, but look comfortable, and the furniture is *excellent:* In the hall is the miserable little camp-bed that Napoleon I used at St. Helena, rather a sad relic: and a large picture of his death there, over it: on the other side of the hall is one of his thrones — a sharp contrast. I need not remind you that it was at Malmaison that Josephine received, from the mouth of her son Eugene, the news that the divorce was really decided upon. One of the cards I send shows a facsimile of her letter "accepting" the divorce — there was a terrible scene first, before she wrote it.

I was lucky enough to find at Malmaison cards illustrating two of the Duchess of Bassano's pictures, *i.e.*, the portrait of the King of Rome, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and the portrait of his father (as First Consul) begun by David.

The little boy is utterly charming. Some other Bonaparte portraits pretty well complete the family! The one of Napoleon III is better than the only one I could find for you here at Versailles. Also I found there a card of Delaroche's superb portrait of Napoleon I.

There are *many* portraits at Malmaison of Josephine and of the Emperor, and busts, too. The odd thing is that some of the busts of the Empress are like Queen Mary. . . .

There are some beautiful bits of tapestry, not large: and plenty of Aubusson tapestry covering furniture — it is priceless, and very delicate and lovely, but not tapestry at all in the strict sense, because it is needlework, and true tapestry is woven on the loom, *e.g.* that of Arras, Gobelins, etc. Josephine's harp is still there, a very beautiful one: her work-table, her card-table, her broidery-frame (very splendid and exquisite workmanship), Napoleon's study, writing-table, etc.

It was at Malmaison that the Bonapartes used to be

all together "*en famille*" even after the Empire had been proclaimed. (Josephine bought the little estate and built the house in 1798; it had been a small Cluniac Abbey.)

Of course it was much too small for the Bonaparte crowd to *sleep* there: but even when the Imperial Court was at the Tuileries (after he had changed the Consulate into the Empire), he encouraged Josephine to dine there almost every day in the week — every day when there was not a state dinner or a state reception at the Tuileries) and he came himself and expected all the brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law to dine there, too. There were plenty of bickerings, and some of the sisters only went because they durst not stay away. It was there that they all fell to squabbling about the kingdoms they wanted, and Napoleon said, "To hear you, one would suppose it was a question of dividing the inheritance of the late King our father."

It *is* odd to stand in those rooms and picture it all: to remember how often they echoed the shrill squabbles of Elise and Pauline and Caroline, the stern voice of the Emperor reducing them all to reason and obedience. After Waterloo he came back for one last look at the place: Josephine was dead — had died there on May 29th in the year before Waterloo — Marie Louise had deserted his fallen fortunes, his son was taken from him, and St. Helena was waiting for him. Everything was gone: only the memories remained. We stood to-day in the shadowed alleys where *he* stood, looking his last good-byes.

It has none of the tragic interest, as it has none of the royal grandeur of Versailles and the Trianons: but it is more homely, and one can see still how it was built, not by an Empress but by Citizen Bonaparte's wife, to be cheerful and comfortable in — "out of her own money."

After the divorce the Empress lived there very quietly,

and pleased everyone by her simple acceptance of her fallen state. She adored flowers and rare plants and spent her hours in gardening. She was there when the Allies entered Paris the first time, to stuff old Louis XVIII's fat figure back on the throne of the Bourbons, and it was there that the Russian Emperor Alexander insisted on paying his respects to her, to the annoyance of some of his meaner brother-sovereigns. When the Allies came again, after Waterloo, she was dead.

It is very odd, the contrast between the Little Trianon and Malmaison: the former so lovely and so haunted by the terrible pathos of Marie Antoinette's story: the latter very charming and full of singular interest, but somehow quite missing all pathos. Of course Josephine was only divorced, and never had her selfish head cut off, she never had any martyr-days, and she had never had half an ounce of religion. Still, I would not have missed seeing Malmaison for anything — if only to make me admire and love the Trianons more. I wonder if my Versailles days are drawing to an end? The rumours of our all moving to Calais are revived, and perhaps that is the explanation of the emptying of our hospital. I should like Calais, as being so near England. However, we know nothing.

Well, it is bed-time again (dinner has come in between the beginning and the ending of this letter).

There was no letter from you to-day, only one from —— in which he says you gave him an "albumen.". . . I hope it doesn't mean you have taken to shying rotten eggs at him, as if he were an old-fashioned Election. He has "halso 'ad some anxusty on accounce of his mother who 'as not been well." You, however, are, he says, "quiet well and Boney and the garden all wright thoghu suffreign from droughts." I really must stop or I shall be too sleepy to undress and my spelling will go the way of ——'s. So good night:

June 21, 1915

For some reason best known to itself our post only arrived late this evening, instead of at 7 A.M. *Tuesday*.

That is all I wrote last night! Then I was called to dinner. Afterwards I tried to go on, but simply *could* not, I was so sleepy. So I gave it up as a bad job.

All day yesterday I was sleepy, and tired too. The weather, so fresh and delightful on Sunday, had turned electric, burning, close, heavy and stifling: and so it is going to be to-day. To-day the insupportable feeling of fatigue has come back, but as it comes with the weather so it will go with it, and we are plainly brewing up for a thunder-storm.

F. spent all yesterday with me: very sweet, very quiet, and quite cheerful, though grave; but alas, alas, I fear his young life will be asked of him. The wounds even *externally* are not all healed yet; but heart, lungs, and other organs are injured *internally*, and I think the doctors do not believe they can be cured. He is in no present danger, but I fear his life will be very, very short; we barely talk of it, but we must both of us be thinking of it. To-day he has gone back to hospital: not to Paris, but to the French Garrison Hospital here, and only for ten days or so, when he hopes to get a "convalescence" of a month, in which case Mme. M. would take him away to the seaside.

I got *two* letters from you this morning, Friday's and Saturday's, both short, but both quite cheery and satisfactory. . . . I wonder if we *are* going to shift to near Calais! No one knows, though we all rather suspect it. I should like the old Dieppe feeling that it was only a step across the water to you: and of course Calais is the *nearest* point in France to England, *really* in sight.

You needn't be afraid of my going up in an aëroplane; it is strictly forbidden to French pilots to take up a

passenger, and we have no English machines in these regions.

I have not been to Paris since F. left it, and except to go and pay *digestive* visits to the Duchess of Bassano and Lady A.-L.: I don't see what's to take me there. So I am not *likely* to be in at the Zeppelin visit from Germany.

I must sally forth to the hospital.

June 22, 1915

YOUR letter arrived this morning, begun when Alice had just arrived. I *am* so glad she is back with you, and I am sure her being there for a bit will cheer you both up, and do you good, like a little change of air.

Strawberries have been going on here a long time, but I did not tell you (1) because you like them and I did not want to make you envious; (2) because I don't, and I have hardly touched any.

Yesterday F. met me at the Pont de l'Alma station and we went on directly to the Duchess of Bassano's. In the train I gave him your gift, with which he was delighted, and your letter, which I had to translate . . . the passages about myself were a trial to my modesty, but I did not mince them, as I hate mince.

By the way I had nothing on earth to do with his conversion, and he was a Catholic before he knew of my existence. The Duchess and her unmarried daughter, Mademoiselle de Bassano — the one who is lady-in-waiting to Princess Napoleon — made up our party of four. I like them both. . . .

The house is very nice, and full of interesting things: especially of splendid miniatures — a wonderfully interesting and precious group of them, mounted together, given to the first Duke of Bassano, all the potentates of that time and all the Bonapartes, male and female: *two* of Jerome, very fine, and also very handsome.

Besides there is an *extremely* interesting portrait, merely begun (not a miniature, a large portrait in oils),

of Napoleon I by David, when Napoleon was First Consul, young and beautiful, for which he only sat ten minutes! all the figure left unpainted. Besides, a *most* beautiful original portrait in oils of the little King of Rome, as a child of five or six; this by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Then splendid full lengths in oils of the first Duke and Duchess of Bassano; she very beautiful, but with a queer suggestion of Josephine, who never was beautiful. Then splendid full-lengths of the Duke and Duchess who were Maître du Palais and Grande Maîtresse du Palais, to Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie . . . and tons of other interesting things: exquisite china — a glorious dinner service of Sèvres made for the first Duke to Napoleon's order, and his gift to him. It was a very pleasant as well as a very interesting visit. To-day has been much cooler, because there is a fussy wind that blows all my papers about the room. . . . Again this afternoon I went for a stroll in the Little Trianon: but crowds of Sunday folk, and I did not stay long.

Poor dear McCurry's mother has shown her gratitude for my affection toward her poor lad by making and sending me two large cakes! I could not help smiling as I undid the parcel, but it was a very wistful smile: poor, poor lady . . . oddly enough the queer gift brought him specially to my memory, for I remember so well how he used to receive her cakes, up at the front, and would always bring the first piece to me. . . . I must write to her, which I will do as soon as I have dined, which I am just going to do.

Ah dear! I have another poor mother to console — one day, the first day I went to Paris, two months ago nearly, I made friends with a young chasseur, who told me he was leaving next day for the front. He told me he had been wild, and I asked him if he would not go to confession before starting. He said "No," but he wrote from the front and said, "You, dear friend of a spring

afternoon, will be glad to know I have done what you asked. I have been to confession and Holy Communion, and persuaded others to do so. . . ." He had told me all about his home life: he lived alone at home with his widowed mother, who has no other boy or girl, and in spite of his wildness was tender and loving to her.

He begged me to send him crucifixes and medals, which I did — but alas, they never reached him. They arrived after he was killed. Oh, my dear, you cannot think how it hurt me, though we only met that once. And his poor mother writes to me so pathetically of the great love the lad had for his English friend seen that once. I had sent him little things, a few shirts, socks, chocolates, cigarettes, tinned potted meats, etc., as I do to many others.

It is a perfect anguish to me to write to these mothers, but it would be a selfishness beyond my depth not to.

Pray for her.

Wednesday, June 23, 1915

Your letter written on Sunday arrived to-day, also one from —— enquiring about a man who was in our hospital for twenty-four hours five weeks ago. Fortunately I could trace him, and found out he had uncommon little the matter with him. However, he seems to have frightened his wife by tragic ideas of gas poisoning. His real disorder was a swelling on a region that I would, if Alice were a Frenchwoman, plainly explain, and neither she nor I would be a penny the worse; but as she is English, or, rather, Irish, I know she would drop dead if I were to mention a part of the human frame that the Almighty had the indiscretion to create: and I have prudently mentioned that the swelling was "local."

We have just had the most helter-skelter rain-storm I ever saw; tons of rain in a few minutes: and last even-

ing it began to rain at six and went on all night — still, it is as stuffy and muggy as ever.

I bought a tonic to-day, and it is so good I should like to be lapping it up all the while.

You and I will never agree about the longest day! I hate summer and am always glad to think that even the first step towards winter has been taken. I suppose it is a question of health, and I am worth ten times my summer value in winter.

I am quite curious to see the pocket handkerchief-case you have made for Lady Austin-Lee: I will go in to Paris on purpose to administer it to her. . . .

This is a frightful letter, but the truth is I can scarcely write; I am so heavy and sleepy.

Saturday Night, June 26, 1915

I AM almost quite well again! The day has been thoroughly fresh and cool (a hot sun, of course), and perhaps that has helped a good deal. Anyway I am practically as well as ever, and the weakness almost gone: that is perhaps partly due to my excellent tonic. I have been out a good deal to-day, which also did me good.

F. turned up about eleven and we went off to the Park; walked up to the château, where I showed F. the chapel, the Queen's apartments (with all their glorious tapestries), the Galerie de Glaces, and the immense Galeries de Batailles. He really enjoyed it immensely, though he is not in the least a sight-seer (like me) by nature. It is always rather a joke with the French that the English are such furious sight-seers.

We have heard no more of our move, and having received new convoys of wounded makes it less likely.

Excuse a brief, and very dull letter. My head feels woolly!

Thursday Evening, 7 P.M., *July* 1, 1915

I SEND you a whole bundle of cards. When I was at the front I remember describing to you the great Castle of Pierrefonds, which we passed on a blazing day of late August or early September: and I have, ever since, been trying to get cards of it. It belongs to the Empress Eugénie, and was bought for her by Napoleon III, who restored it, for it was quite ruinous. It is perhaps the most magnificent of all the ancient feudal castles of France. The Empress, when she travels, always calls herself Comtesse de Pierrefonds, just as old Queen Victoria's incognito title was Countess of Balmoral. I hope you will admire the cards: they really give a good idea of the vast and imposing character of the castle, as of its beauty; they only fail to give (on account of their smallness) the idea of the magnificent situation, towering up above the town and above a billowy forest-country.

I went in to Paris and lunched with Lady Austin-Lee and Sir Henry: there was no one else, and Lady A.-L. was very nice. She is thoroughly pleased with your gift, and praised its beauty and its wonderful workmanship.

Tell Christie that Sir H.'s brother, who died suddenly last year, was for many years Rector of Guernsey, and I am sure she knew him. Sir Henry owns a little island, called Jethou, that I remember very well, just opposite St. Peter Port at Guernsey. And he remembers well the Maisonette where Christie lived: his own sisters lived in a house close to it.

We keep getting new batches of wounded in, so the talk of our all moving off to Calais has died out again. Among the wounded I was chatting with to-day was a young Jew! One very rarely comes across Jews in the army, and as there is no Hebrew chaplain here I thought the lad might like to be talked to, and so he did. He

is very well educated, of the upper middle-class, his mother, a widow, living in Hampstead: his name Ettlinger. I asked him if he was a *good* Jew, and he said "No, I'm afraid not: but my mother is." He has only been out here nine weeks, and has a bullet through his thigh. I asked him what he disliked most in the trenches, and he said, "The flies.". . . Can't you imagine them?

In the next bed was a Canadian, one of my own chickens (rather past the spring-chicken stage, being forty-four years old). After giving him prayer-books, rosaries, etc., he asked my name and I told him. "Oh, I know it well," he said, "and often read your books. You're John Ayscough."

While I was out to-day, someone called, and Madame Beranek said it was a Mrs. Ong-ding-dong. I fancied some Chinese lady must have called, but when I found the cards they were those of a Mr. and Mrs. Huntington: some relations, I suppose, of Constant Huntington, the American publisher. A very old lady, Mme. Beranek says. I asked if the lady was English and she said, "Quite the contrary. Entirely American."

I showed the Duchess of Bassano your miniature, and she said we are exactly alike.

I think I must go to bed. This is an uncommonly drivelling letter, and I should advise you to read it if you feel unable to sleep; it ought to act like magic. Everyone else is in bed, and the blameless snores of M. Beranek through the house protest against the use of lamp-oil at this late hour.

So good night, and God bless you all.

Saturday Evening, July 3, 1915

I WAS talking to one of my men in hospital, and the man in the next bed, when I got up to go on to someone else, said, "Good afternoon, Father."

"I didn't know you were a Catholic."

"Well, I'm not, but I ought to be. My father and mother were: but they died and I was brought up by my granny in Wales, and there was no Catholic church, and I went to a Protestant church and school."

"The first recollections I have," said I, "are of Wales. I went there at about two years old and left it when I was five or six. Llangollen was the name of the little place where we lived."

"And that was where I lived."

Wasn't it odd? And we had great talks; about the Dee, and the Barber's Hill, Dhinas Bran (sic?) the Eghosygs (sic??), Valle Crucis Abbey, the Chain Bridge, etc. But what seemed to me most odd, was he knew quite well the house where the Stewarts lived, and says that two Misses Stewart live there still: our old friends Grace and Jessie, I suppose. He called the house by its name (long forgotten by me) and I recognised it at once, but it has again slipped away out of my head: I will ask him again to-morrow and write it down.

I had another chat with my young Jew, and asked him what they gave him for breakfast — the usual thing is a very large hunk of bread and butter with excellent *bacon*.

"Oh," he said, laughing, "I have got uncommonly fond of bacon: and if Moses saw our clean-fed English bacon he wouldn't mind."

I'm afraid he's not a very correct Jew, for he says synagogue bores him frightfully, as it is all in Hebrew, of which he doesn't understand a syllable.

I'm so glad you got out in the bath-chair and enjoyed it: I tried to picture the plain and almost failed: I've seen so much *France* lately, and it is so different. But I don't *care* for France a bit, much as I love the French. I love England, and our plain, quite apart from any affection I have for people there. Versailles is a charming place, but I've no more *affection* for it than the first day I saw it.

Of course "Orley Farm," which you are reading, belongs only to Trollope's second or third group, but as a novel I think it ranks fairly high in that lower grade.

It is bed-time and when I go early to bed I sleep; if I sit up late I lie awake for hours.

Give my best love to Christie and Alice, and tell them how I should like to be where they are.

Monday, July 5, 1915

Yesterday I had to attend a Kermesse for the hospitals: it was at Chaville, a few miles out of Versailles, in a pretty place. The heat was amazing—one felt like a *hot-water melon* in a cucumber-frame, and the crowd didn't make it any cooler. The prices were all exorbitant, just as in an English bazaar, whereas at Countess Missiessy's Kermesse they were most moderate. My soldier servant observed grimly, "You can't *open your mouth* here under three francs!" He is rather a character: if I scold him for anything he always has some disease or pain which *I* have recently had; the argument being, of course, "Come! I pitied *you* when you had it . . ." On Saturday he walked off with the key of the chapel in the hospital, and gave me a lot of trouble sending all over the place for him. I began to "wash his head," and he said, "Oh! I have such frightful dysentery, just like you had last week."

Yesterday he left all the electric light burning in the chapel, in broad daylight: when I expostulated he said, "Oh! I have such dreadful toothache — just like you had two months ago."

To return to the Kermesse; Madame Joffre, wife of the Commander-in-chief of the Allied Armies, was there, treated with great pomp: she was sitting close to me.

There was a concert, *al fresco*, and some *very* good things at it. Two famous actors sang and recited; and another less famous professional actor sang some very touching

little war things — one made me weep! It was all a sort of patter song, but represented a letter written by a child to his father whom he supposes to be still alive in the trenches, begging him to come home quick, *everything so changed at home.* "Maman wears ugly black clothes, and only cries," and "the other children in the street who play with me give me a new nickname, though they won't say what it means — 'orphan.'" A lady, Madame Thirard, sang seven or eight *Old French* songs, quite exquisitely, her voice and training simply magnificent: though she was not professional. My servant is clumping about, trying to make me give him my letters, and nearly driving me mad. His boots weigh hundred-weights and the noise they make on this parquet is appalling. I must stop or I shall assassinate Rifleman Wilcox with a nail-scissors.

July 5, 1915

I AM going to fire off my letter to you, but without much knowing what to put in it.

It is almost cold sitting at my window; there has been a hot enough sun all day, and when one was walking about one did not fail to *feel* hot: but the wind is so strong and fresh that after sitting still for a while it is almost more than cool: so I am freshened up: though, as I have already remarked several times, the recent goes of heat have never tired me like the first; because my health is quite all right again.

This afternoon I had a long talk with a young wounded Scotch officer. Not a Catholic; but a Presbyterian, a son of Lord Balfour of Burleigh. He was shot straight through the head, just under the eyes, from one side of the cheek bone to the other: he seems doing well, but cannot use his eyes much. He seemed glad to have me to talk to, and I stayed over an hour with him. He was at Balliol and is a man of books and literature. It was rather funny, I had just before been talking down in

the wards to another young Scotsman, a charming lad of eighteen, also Presbyterian, and I told Mr. Balfour about him. "Do you know where he is from, and his regiment?" he asked. "Yes, from Falkirk in Stirlingshire, and he is in the Argylls." "Good gracious, Monsignor!" Mr. Balfour exclaimed, "what an ear you must have! You answered me exactly in the Stirlingshire accent."

I told him that I found it much easier to talk in Scots dialect than in Irish brogue, though I am half Irish, and have never set foot in Scotland.

He is really nice, and clever, too, and he won my heart by praising my Royal Irish Rifles whom he had come across at the front. He said they were quite charming; and, as a rule, Scotsmen don't appreciate the Irish.

(Here's a young French soldier come to see me, so I must finish after dinner).

9.30 P.M.

He stayed till 8.45, then I dined and read, and now back to my letter. I happened to read during my little lonely meal the part of David Copperfield where his aunt bids him be patient with "Little Blossom" and not try to worry her into being something she could never be: oddly enough this pricked my own conscience about F.; I am always trying to make people have my own tastes, when after all they only *are* tastes, and others have just as much right to theirs. I am energetic, hating to be a moment without definite occupation, eager to be reading, or writing, or learning something: and I think I have been tormenting him to be the same, when it is not his nature, and when he, poor child, is broken down in health and hope. Perhaps I have half reproached him with causing me to be idle, when really there is no idleness in helping and comforting one who is lonely and needs help and comfort.

I feel sure that this lesson God has sent me, bidding

me be more patient, and learn from *him*, for the boy has a gentle sweetness of heart that is far beyond me. He is never sharp, or sarcastic, *never* says a cutting thing to wound.

Well, to go on.

I have not thanked you for the dear little silk bag of lavender, which I keep close to me: smelling of home and our little quiet garden, and made by you for me. But you may be sure I shall keep it, lovingly, till we meet.

Talking of my sharp tongue: it's a pity it does not grow out of my heart instead of my mouth! My heart is neither cold nor hard, nor bitter; but my tongue is, and it often "pique" as they say here — "*pique comme les moustiques.*" It happens sometimes that I speak sharply *because* I am so sad. I have suffered so many hurts during this agony of war — if I were a coward, which I know I'm not, I should long ago have said, "Never make a new friend: the war will hurt you in him, kill him for you." But that meanness I do refuse, and God sends me almost daily a new friend — and, then, some day, comes the news that one of these friends has been killed; and it makes me so sore that all my heart is sore, and, to hide tears, I speak with a quick sharpness. O dear! And all the time I *can* be gentle, only it is more trouble; as for poor F. I know I could easily so wound him that he would just give it all up and despair of pleasing me. He does not know how to "let fly back" or reproach. He is very shy and sensitive.

When he was a tiny child his father was angry with him and said, "You had better go to your uncle. I don't want you here." And he took it silently, seriously, and walked off, not to his uncle's, because he was ashamed, but away in the night into the mountains. It seemed to him impossible to stay where he was not wanted. And at twenty-three he would do much the same now.

Also when he was tiny a cousin of his stole some money

from Baron C., and the Baron accused his son of it. "I do not steal," was all he would say; and his father beat him, and he was broken-hearted to be thought capable of stealing. But he would not explain, though he guessed. At last, after days of disgrace and bread and water for him, his aunt, the cousin's mother, herself found out who had stolen, and went to his father and told him.

"I," said I, "should *never* have forgiven him; not for the beating, but for thinking me, his son, a thief."

"But," said F., "my father cried; and it seemed fearful to me that he should cry about me. Of course I forgave him in a minute. Only I was ashamed, because he begged my forgiveness, and sons are not to pardon but to be pardoned."

Well, it is bed-time, and I want to try and get to sleep early: I always get up rather early, and when I sit up late I do not soon get to sleep: when I go early to bed I sleep almost at once.

Give my best love to Alice and Christie: I have none to give you, because you have had it all these fifty-seven years.

Monday Evening

It was only this morning that I wrote to you, but I am beginning again instead of waiting for to-morrow morning, for the reason I have so often given you — that when I do put it off till the morning I am constantly called away, or interrupted.

This morning I had barely finished writing to you when F. walked in, whom I had not expected to see to-day at all. The doctor in charge of his hospital had invited us both to luncheon and he had come to march me off. The doctor's name is de Grande Maison, whose son, Richard de Grande Maison, I have known for some weeks.

We lunched with Dr. de Grande Maison at a restaurant and got on very well: but I left most of the talking to them. Sometimes I get fierce attacks of laziness and don't feel inclined to expose my queer French, or expose myself to queerer English; then I fall into brilliant flashes of silence. However, when we parted the doctor said I must come and lunch with him "in the chest of his family."

Then F. went home to *his* hospital and I went to mine to do a little work among the wounded and sick. The Llangollen man has gone away and I could not ask him to tell me again the name of the Stewarts' house — was it Aber-dy-coed? It was something like that, I'm sure.

A soldier who works in the garden here (one of the sixty who sleep in the barn) has only one eye; and I asked him if it was the Germans who had deprived him of the other. He said, No, he had lost it long ago; when he was a baby, a wasp had stung it out! I think that sounds almost worse than a bullet.

Next Sunday there are going to be *Grandes Eaux* in the park and gardens, that is to say, all the thousands of fountains are going to play — for the first, and perhaps the only time during the war. It is a great sight, and if it isn't too hot I shall certainly go and see it. You remember my telling you about a young Scotsman whose accent I reproduced so well to young Balfour of Burleigh that he was rather impressed by the excellence of my ear? Well, he wasn't a Catholic — on the contrary an excellent Presbyterian! But he wrote me such a dear little letter from Scotland to thank me for my kindness, and to-day comes another — I sent him one of those post-card portraits in uniform. "It *was* kind of you to send it," he says, "and my, it could be no liker you. I let two of the chaps that were in Versailles see it, and we all love it, because you were so kind and true. . . ." I think that "true" such a nice expression.

Friday, 2 P.M., *July* 9, 1915

I HAD again put off my letter to you till this morning, and just as I began, before going round to the hospital, a young French officer came to find me, sent by that Colonel Comte du Manoir who was Commandant d'Armes at Dieppe. My visitor is called Lieutenant Tabourier, a very nice young fellow, extremely well-bred, but oh, so ill! He has been invalided down from the trenches, suffering from gastro-enteritis, and it is a chronic sort that will keep him ill for ever so long. He looks like a skeleton *chicken*, and is evidently so weak he can hardly move about. It seems he can eat nothing, digest nothing, not even milk.

However, he can talk, and did so. He is devoted to England and the English, and has been a good deal in England. He is a little thing, as short as I am (only much less of him) and he rather touched me, he looked so wistful as he spoke of his ruined health. He lives here with his mother, who has taken a house to be near another soldier son in garrison here.

Yesterday afternoon I returned the call of the Ong-ding-dongs, but saw no one; the maid said Madame was in but invisible. Their staircase smelt vehemently of cats.

Why do you spell Ayscough without the "y"? Ascough? I notice you always do, and it makes me laugh that you shouldn't know your own son's name.

Monday Morning, *July* 12, 1915

A NEW lot of wounded and sick came in yesterday, but not a *very* big lot — two hundred and eighty. There were very few Catholics among them, the largest proportion being Presbyterians.

In the afternoon I went to the Park to see the *Grandes Eaux*, but I thought the vast crowd more interesting than

the fountains. Of course there *was* no crowd, for no conceivable number of people could *crowd* those vast gardens and terraces. I should say there were at least thirty thousand soldiers only — apart from the civilians — and of these many were wounded. A French crowd is not a bit like an English one; there is no jostling, or hustling, no horse-play or noise: and not a hint of anyone the worse for drink.

The gardens looked charming; with immense numbers of flowers blown out since my last visit to them.

After all, I did not stay very long: it seems to me you can't go on staring at fountains playing, and as for walking about the park and gardens I prefer doing that when they are nearly empty. So I trotted home, had my tea, and went back to do a little work in the hospital. Then home, where I began reading again George Meredith's "Ordeal of Richard Feverel" which I had not read for twelve years.

Of course it is brilliant; but it is restlessly so, uneasy, and one feels as if the author, while telling his story, was letting off fireworks round your head all the time. I will send it on for you to read.

I think "Can you Forgive Her?" very good. What excellent characters old Lady Macleod, the old Squire, Kate Vavasor, and Planty Pall are — so, too, is Lady Glencora, though (like you) I want to box her ears. And the minor characters are excellent also — The Marchioness, Lady Auld Reekie, the Misses Palliser, Alice's father, Geoffrey Palliser — all as good as possible: and Aunt Greenow *perfect.* The great failure is Mr. Grey: he is terribly good and I don't wonder Alice didn't want to marry him, and be bottled up with him and his housekeeper in Cambridgeshire. She ought to have married Geoffrey Palliser. George Vavasor is appalling, but all the same he is splendidly drawn— *too* well for one's comfort: he gives me the "creeps" even to read of.

Your letter of Friday came this morning: I am so glad you are getting the high comb: it shows you are interested in your mantilla! . . .

F. being away makes me realize fully how awfully tired I am of Versailles, and of being in France at all. I *like* the French immensely, and *love* the French soldier, but oh! I am homesick! You see I am odd. I only care to have *friends*, and acquaintances bore me to extinction. And very often *French* bores me. I long to talk in a language in which I *can* talk: and I want my own things around me, our own fields to look out on, my own roof over my head. Though I must confess I like the French people *much* better than the Wiltshire villager.

Now I must go to the hospital and so good-bye.

Monday Night, July 12, 1915

To-day it has been fresh, almost cool, *i.e.* the *air* has really been cool, only the sun has been hot, and when one had been moving about quickly one got hot enough — because in addition to the warm sun the air here is always moist. I should not care to *live* at Versailles at all, because I am sure I should never feel energetic here, at least in summer. I really don't know what I am going to make a letter out of — I have done nothing, outside the routine of the hospital, and seen nobody except the hospital staff and patients. I asked the matron, who is a very nice woman, what she thought of the *Grandes Eaux* yesterday, and she was, like myself, a little disappointed: I told her of a remark I overheard a French soldier make, and she said it was extremely descriptive, though not very refined! I must tell you that I was standing near the Fountain of Latona, the design of which resembles an enormous wedding-cake. At the top, in the centre, is Latona; around the top tier are bronze frogs gilt, and around the next tier bronze-gilt tortoises, around the next bronze-gilt alligators. We

were all waiting for the water to come gushing and spouting out of all their open mouths. But instead of beginning with a fierce gush it began with a slobbering dribble. "Poor frogs," said the soldier, "they *are* weak: they can hardly be sick." This morning I went for a little turn in the gardens and thought how much nicer they were with not a soul in them. The flowers looked charming, and the beds and borders are arranged with such taste and simplicity.

On Thursday night young Vicomte de Missiessy is coming to dinner, and I am dining with his people another night. He is now a soldier, having become eighteen a month ago, and is in a dragoon regiment here. He is a very nice lad, extremely well-bred as well as being nice-looking. Comtesse de Missiessy is charming, of Mrs. Lawrence Drummond's type, as I remember telling you. She is Belgian, but her husband French. I shall ask Chavasse (of our hospital), F., and young Lieutenant Tabourier to meet him. Chavasse doesn't talk much French, and de Missiessy and Tabourier both talk English. Chavasse is the officer who blood-poisoned his finger some weeks ago. He is better, but not well yet; it is funny his talking no French, for I suppose he *is* French — at all events, Chavasse is a purely French name.

I see the Emperor William has announced that there will be no winter campaign, *i.e.*, that the war will be over before the winter. I hope he will prove right, but it doesn't depend on him, as he wants Germany to think.

. . . The nun who sends the *St. Joseph's Lilies* asked me to note what the American poet, Joyce Kilmer, who was converted by "Gracechurch," says of me in it. What *does* he say?

Saturday Night, July 17, 1915

I HAVE just come in from another longish walk, and again feel much better for it; even when one comes in

tired from walking — unless it should be a walk altogether too long — it is a good sort of tiredness, and does one no harm. One rests and it is gone. What I hate is the feeling of tiredness when one has done nothing; and as to that I am ever so much better.

F. and I went in to Paris this morning, and lunched with Lady Austin-Lee. . . . She asked me to give her luncheon here on Tuesday, and I have asked Comtesse de Missiessy to come and meet her. After luncheon she had to go out with Princess de Moskowa, grand-niece of Napoleon I, and I went and did a little shopping.

I am very glad that Ver's tiny holiday did him good, and you must ask him again. I think the Manor House is a peaceful spot, and I think an antidote to the war-microbe whereby we are all devastated. What a bore for Christie and Alice that the old church is being closed (like a club) for alteration and repairs: it is so near and so homely.

Yes, I was amused at M. G. finding you "deffer," as he seems to have tried very little to grapple with your *dephness*. There are none so dumb as those who have nothing on earth to say. I think next time he comes you and he had better *correspond* across the table, as you and Mr. Gater used to do.

There was once an old Lord William Compton who was absolutely "*deff*" and would use no sort of trumpet, but he kept a slate on his table and his friends had to write on it: he was very impatient, and watched what they were writing, to guess from the beginning of the sentence what the whole of it would be; and he would not let them put in all the little words, articles, prepositions, etc. One day Lady Northampton wanted to tell him that the Queen (Victoria) was perhaps going to take a cruise to Madeira. She only got as far as "Queen perhaps going Mad," when he snatched the slate out of her hand and shouted:

"Don't tell me! She's as sane as you are, though George III *was* her grandfather!"

You'd be just like that if you had a slate, so I hope you won't start one.

My soldier-servant has been boxing every night this week in a tournament, and last night was the final; he came off best of all, and won the "purse" — also he obtained two black eyes, not very black. Oddly enough, before he was my servant, he was poor Richard Eden's — Lady Auckland's elder son, whom you remember as a small boy at Plymouth. He was killed some months ago at the front. He was about twenty or twenty-one. So the younger brother, whom his mother brought to see us, will be the next Auckland.

Madame Beranek announced three-quarters of an hour ago that my dinner was ready: so I'd better go and eat it. Good night.

Sunday Evening, July 18, 1915

It has been an excellent day, fine, but fresh, and now it is heavenly; still cool, but with a clear, cloudless sky, pale forget-me-not blue at the zenith fading down from lavender to faded rose-leaf tint at the horizon; the swallows flying miles high — almost among the aëroplanes!

I know *you* hate the black sort of day you describe in the letter that came from you to-day, wet, cold, dark: but honestly I don't. I can't pretend that it is the weather I should choose for a long march in khaki, without umbrella or mackintosh: but for an *indoors* day I like it — it makes me feel pleasant, homey, and sheltered! They laughed at me here the other day because the weather was just like that, and everyone was saying "How miserable!" but I could not pretend to agree, and confessed I liked it. "It's like England," I declared.

From 12.45 to 3.15 — two hours and a half — I walked to-day, and it did me tons of good. I walked nearly all over the park, through woody places I had not visited, and all round the Grand Canal to the Big and Little Trianons, through them both, and so out by the gate near our hospital, where I went in and did some visiting, my young Jew among others.

Then home to tea: and that's all my doings. How can I make you a letter of such monotonies? I am ever so much better, and feel stronger every day: it has never been very hot quite lately: and that has given me a chance of recovering my strength.

. . . Lord Glenconner's son at the Dardanelles sends good news, and is so far safe and sound: they are very happy about the marriage — engagement, I mean: the marriage is to be in August. The bridegroom, who is in the 2d Life Guards is a son of a Yorkshire squire.

. . . Mme. Beranek says I'm to go and eat.

Monday Morning, 9.30

YOUR letter of Friday has just come, and I am delighted to hear that the gowns have come and are a success: I hope to see you in them one of these days. I am sure that café-au-lait coloured gown ought to suit you.

Wilcox tells me that a large convoy of over seven hundred wounded is expected at the hospital and I must go round there.

Monday Night, July 19, 1915

IT is half-past ten and I ought to go to bed instead of beginning a letter to you! I have just got in from dining with Comtesse de Missiessy (as you find the name difficult, I will spell it in capitals, MISSIESSY), where I had a delightful evening. *She* is quite charming, and so are her children: the eldest, the young Count,

is at the front; but *my* friend Michel was there, and the daughter, a very pretty, distinguée girl — very English-looking, and extremely proud of looking so! They all talk English well, Madame de Missiessy, perfectly. There was also a dear little soldier, Henri Manon, who talked it nicely, though with less care.

Besides there were four ladies — not babies — who talked only French, but all very nice. . . . It was Madame de Missiessy's fête, and I fortunately knew it, and took her a box of beautiful flowers, which everybody raved over.

Just after I had arrived, all the others (including the fiancé of Mademoiselle) trooped in, all bearing flowers, and some bonbons and presents, and administered them to Madame with infinite embracing. It was all very intimate and cordial, and pretty, and I was glad to see it all.

The house (it is an "apartment" or, as we say, a flat) is charming, and all arranged with excellent taste like an English house of the best class. . . . And the people were to match: there was a general air of real distinction, with perfect simplicity and cheerful cordiality. The dinner was quite excellent, too, and the conversation easy, interesting, and pleasant, no gossip.

The Comtesse is just forty, and has been a widow eighteen years, since six months before Michel's birth. She *is* so pretty, with heaps of white hair, very dark eyebrows, big, dark-blue eyes, and a brilliant, youthful complexion. The future son-in-law is very intelligent, and talks admirably, but not in English. It was a great contrast to my luncheon party here, which bored me flat.

My guests arrived at eleven-thirty and stayed till nearly four! And the doctor! He is, I am sure, clever in his way, but his way is not my way. Luncheon was over by quarter-past one: I hoped that after a cigarette the doctor would go to look after his patients, but No!

he sat on at the table till twenty to four, and I nearly died of sleepiness! Two and a half hours! O dear! How I wished all his patients would get worse and send round for him. To look at him he is very like Captain Cust, but without a bit of Captain Cust's social charm and talent. The son would, I think, have been better company had his papa not been there. As it was he only ate and smiled: his smile is enormous, as big as a tea-plate.

Now I've told you my day's dissipations, I will go to bed!

Wednesday, July 21, 1915

I OUGHT to have written to you last night, but stayed out walking till 8.20, and it was 8.45 before I had changed and washed for dinner; 9.30 before I had finished dinner, as I smoked and read papers after it; and when I came up I went to bed. Some weeks ago I was sleeping extremely badly, but now I am sleeping *excellently* again, as it is my custom to do.

Wednesday Night.

I HAD only got so far this morning when I had to go off to the hospital and have only now got back too late for to-day's post! I hope you will forgive me: I do not very often miss a day, but somehow to-day I seemed *running after things* without overtaking them.

To go back, first, to yesterday, my luncheon party was a great success, a marked contrast to that of the day before. Lady Austin-Lee and Comtesse de Missiessy got on like a house afire, and there was plenty of interesting and nice talk. Afterwards M. Milicent, the future son-in-law, came in to pay his respects to me, and soon after Mlle. de Missiessy called for her mother, and they all went off. I enjoyed it as much as I had *dis*enjoyed the tedious though excellent doctor and his son.

This morning at the hospital I was talking to my young Jew: I must tell you that he is very nice and not at all Israelitish-looking. He said, "Yesterday afternoon a smart lady (Lady Somebody) from Paris was visiting the patients, and she talked to me a long time. At last in speaking of this hospital she said it was a Franciscan monastery — at least the property was, but the Government turned the poor Fathers out, and confiscated the property, and a syndicate of nasty Jews bought it and built this hotel: 'Why are you laughing?' 'Because I am a nasty Jew myself.' 'You! Aren't you English?' 'Oh yes, but I am a Jew.' She was much taken aback and went off. Then the man in the next bed said, 'Why did you pull her leg? She's offended.' 'Pull her leg? How?' 'Pretending to be a Jew.' 'It's no pretence, I *am* a Jew.' 'O Lord! I thought you were Church of England at least.'"

He always *begs* me to stay on and talk, and says he looks forward so to my coming. He is not a very strict Jew, but he has an honest young face, and I am sure leads a good, clean life. He is in Lord Denbigh's regiment, the Honourable Artillery Company. I remember once their coming to Bulford, and Lord Denbigh came and chatted after Mass: when he was gone the orderly said, "Ah, in that regiment even the 'orses are baronets!"

I had another long letter to-day from Lady O'Conor. She was very much pleased by your inviting her. They are going at the beginning of next month to a house she has taken near Dorking, where the Wilfrid Wards live: and she will not move at all till she returns to London in the autumn.

I also had your long letter of Sunday. I owe Winifred a letter since the Year 1, and ought to answer her, and will do so. But I am terribly lazy about letters. There is so little to say.

To-day's papers give rather depressing accounts of the Russians, and I am afraid they will lose Warsaw, though

I still hope not. Lloyd George seems to have settled the strike.

. . . I had better bring this letter of scraps to a close, and go to bed.

These few picture post-cards come from a young French friend who is at Clermont-Ferrard in the Puy de Dôme. He says their hospitals are full of poor French soldiers with their eyes burned out by the horrible liquid flame the Germans squirt at them. I wonder what *next* the brutes will invent.

There is a good article this week by the M.P., Joynson-Hicks, insisting on the need for a Minister of Aviation. Really, but for the *Daily Mail's* incessant agitation on the subject, our forces would have had no aircraft when this war came on us.

Yes, I quite know Solanums: they are very easy to class: and I never thought for a moment that Beranek was right as to the flower and leaf you sent by me.

Friday Morning, July 23, 1915

This is going to be a measly short letter: yesterday I was doing dull odds and ends of things all day, and from tea-time to bed-time (except during dinner) was writing *duty* letters, so mine to you never came off. I walked for a good bit in the afternoon, but only in Versailles, not in the parks: and in the course of my perambulation bought the enclosed few post-cards, three of our hospital ("Trianon Palace") and the rest miscellaneous views in town and park: I do not *remember* having bought them before, but may have done so.

It began raining about midnight, and went on till five or six this morning, but now it is very fine and very fresh.

Your story of the General and his execution in the Tower is indeed "ghastly": but I feel sure that if it be true his name could not be hard to find out, for Generals do

not disappear without its being known, and before they disappear their names are not unknown. Bert does accumulate most tragic stories: don't you remember about five minutes after war was declared his informing us that eleven German Dreadnoughts had been sent to the bottom of the North Sea? — and unfortunately it isn't true *yet*.

Saturday Evening, July 24, 1915

Your last two letters from me were measly little things: this evening I will try and write you at all events a longer one: I can't undertake to make it a more interesting one, as my day has produced nothing to make a letter of.

When I was writing this morning I had a headache, but it is quite gone.

I am writing at my window, but the only colour in the garden is that of the red trousers of the soldiers working in it; for the moment the flowers are all over, and it is largely Beranek's fault; for there *were* tons of geraniums of all colours, but he would not pick any and they have all gone to seed.

In the street I met the little Lieutenant Tabourier, of whom I told you a couple of weeks ago; the young friend of my friend, Comte du Manoir, Commandant d'Armes at Dieppe. He looked all clothes, with hardly enough body inside to hang them on. The two young men compared notes about their illness (which is partly the same) and it seemed to me rather sad and tragic to hear them: so young both, and so wistfully engaged both in the hard struggle to regain life and health.

This morning the swallows were flying along the ground; to-night they are almost out of sight up in the sky.

It is a pity Mr. Gater can't be here; there are tons of butterflies, and plenty of good ones; some big ones that I have never seen since Llangollen days, and some that I never saw before.

To-day's Paris *Daily Mail* seemed full of goodish news — Russian, Serbian, French, and English: I mean war news.

I got your letter this morning, enclosing Lady O'Conor's, and one from her to myself by the same post: but I spoke of the address to my letters in mine to you *this* A.M. You needn't imagine that because I gave her A. P. O., S. 6., B. E. Force for address, that I have been shipped off to the front or somewhere: that Post office is *in* No. 4 General Hospital — a regular Post office, for telegrams, registered letters, and so on.

I received "The Book of Snobs," and had my nose in it while I drank my tea this afternoon. My tea also comes regularly (I don't mean in the tea-pot) from England, and is excellent. French people's tea is despicable.

A Madame D—— came to worry me yesterday, sent by the nuns. She, it seems, has always had English governesses, and wants to economise during the war, but does *not* want her boys and girls to forget their English, so she had conceived the brilliant idea that a nursing sister from the hospital might come and chat English with her family daily for two hours — for a cup of tea! I should like to see them do it! They are worked terribly hard, and it is sad work enough, and trying to health; when they get off duty they like to be out in the fresh air, in the park, or rowing on the Grand Canal, not jammed up in a drawing-room smelling of cats. Perhaps Madame D—— thought *I* might offer my services as unpaid nursery-governess: but I didn't.

I gather from you that Roger's engagement is hung up like Mahomet's coffin: I don't fancy he will break his heart, but I still think such a marriage would have added to the comfort of his decline of life. I rather admire old maids (it isn't generally their fault), but I don't at all admire most old bachelors: a selfish, unamiable race as a rule.

It is getting too dark to write, and *I* will dry up:

The whole Beranek family baths itself on Saturday nights in the bath-room adjoining my "apartment," and does it with unspeakable groanings.

Wednesday Evening, July 28, 1915

I REALLY think I must *invent* episodes to fill my letters with, so complete is the absence of real episodes of late. To-day's events are as follows. Mass; breakfast; hospital; luncheon; visit to F. in hospital; return and tea.

Isn't it exciting?

I have been revelling in having some English books to read. "The Book of Snobs" I finished in two days, but there are other stories and sketches in the volume. And I have just read rather (only rather) a nice sketch of Jane Austen — but anything about Jane Austen interests me.

This book I will send you on and you can read it for yourself. It is one of those Lady O'Conor sent, as was "Mademoiselle Ixe," which I sent you yesterday. I read "Mademoiselle Ixe" when it came out about thirty years ago, and cannot read it again, though I can read all Jane Austen (and do) twice every year, and all George Eliot at least once each year. "Mademoiselle. Ixe" (so they say) was refused by seventeen publishers and brought the publisher who accepted it at last so much that he gave the authoress £10,000 for her next book that no one cared sixpence for.

Thursday A.M.

YOUR letter of Monday has just arrived, and I am delighted that you liked the *Country Life* and the odds and ends of photographs I had sent. The picture of young Percy Wyndham was the absolute image of him: he had not much of his father's family's cleverness, but he had a very sweet and kind nature, and never

looked as if he knew himself to possess almost perfect beauty. So far as I can gather, neither of George Northey's sons is killed, but Anson, the Catholic, is wounded: as a matter of fact, the younger, Armand, is a cripple and could not be out here.

It is bright and fine but quite cool, and everyone notices how much better I look — in consequence.

I must go round to hospital.

Friday Evening, July 30, 1915

It has been a lovely day and is now a lovely evening, not hot, but with the soft afterglow of a warm sunset: swallows miles high, and a sky like lavender-satin. Down in the garden the French soldiers working, chatting, laughing, their red caps and legs like patches of blossom here and there among the green.

Mlle. Beranek came home this morning from Switzerland, and the father and mother are shining with delight at her return; this bit of Edelweiss she brought for me and I send it on to you: you know it is a "*porte-bonheur*," otherwise I don't particularly admire it, it is too flannel-petticoaty.

I did some work in hospital this A.M., but we have not a *great* number of wounded for the moment. One man is doing very well who had a bullet cut out of the muscles of his heart three days ago! After all, you see, *some* operations do good! I do admire the doctors and nurses, they have such hard and difficult work, and do it all with such unfailing gentleness and devotion.

My friend Chavasse is now quite well again — the young doctor who cut his own finger very deeply while operating on a gangrened leg. For some time it was touch and go whether he would develop perhaps a fatal blood-poisoning.

I got a letter just now from a friend of Lady O'Conor's, a Comtesse de —— who lives in Paris, asking me to

tea: she is the widow of a diplomat, like Lady O'C., and she speaks with ardent affection of her. She has two sons, both at the front.

The young Jew I told you of is going to England in a day or two, and I shall quite miss him. Yesterday a Comtesse somebody, wife of a friend of his, came to see him, and the Colonel nabbed her as she was going in and asked ever so many odd questions. "Was she a married woman?" etc., concluding with, "Have you any reason to think it will give him any pleasure to see you?"

A fly flew into my right eye yesterday, and never flew out again: it felt about the size of an aëroplane and hurt, and my eye still pains me. No doubt it was meant for a compliment, but I'd much rather flies would *not* take my eye for a portion of the firmament.

This afternoon I spent with F. He is beginning to teach himself English, and it is rather funny, especially as the book (grammar and phrase-book) is most ridiculous. Here is one of the phrases (mind, the book is quite new and modern!): "These ladies are uneasy because they have no back-scratchers." I assured him that, though our great-great-grandmothers may have used back-scratchers, English ladies are not now uneasy without them. In a shop the purchaser demands "An ounce of tea and four cheeses," and I hastened to relieve his mind as to the sort of meal he might expect in England. What is most mysterious is that while there is *no* sounded H in French at all, in English he (like all French people) sticks a fierce H at the beginning of every word that really starts with a vowel. He is rather shocked at Roger's wanting to marry a young female of twenty-seven, and thinks it will lead to "chagrins" — the chagrin being that the young lady will probably flirt with someone nearer her own age. I assured him that in Roger's neighbourhood the only youths would be sheep. Then he said, "But if your brother has a son, by the

time he is twenty your brother will be seventy-nine. How can he educate that young man properly?" I hinted that Roger would be likely to bother himself very little with "that young man's education." French people are so very practical, and in marriage their great idea is the education of the children. I couldn't help laughing at the picture evoked of Roger strenuously educating his son, and devoured with regret that he was not young enough to be a companion to his boy.

I pointed out that Mrs. Roger would add much to her husband's comfort by nursing him as he grew old.

"Good gracious (*Mon Dieu!*), do you marry your nurses in England?" exclaimed F. in horror.

"Not always. Sometimes (when we are greedy) we marry our cooks."

But that he refused to believe, and said I was *rigoleur*. Mrs. Beranek says I am to go down to my dinner!

So good night. God bless you and give you none but happy dreams ever.

Saturday Night, July 31, 1915

I HAVE often grumbled lately because I had nothing to make a letter out of: to-night I have too much, though it doesn't concern myself, so you needn't be alarmed! It concerns the Beraneks: they have all been arrested and carted off to prison, accused of being spies.

I will tell you the whole story. When I came in this morning from saying Mass, I saw a couple of strange men outside the door, but didn't think much of it, because with a number of soldiers quartered in the *grenier* (it isn't a real barn, but a sort of large shed) many unknown people come and go.

But when I got into the hall, there was Jeanne Beranek, the daughter, who came to me in floods of tears, saying that their naturalisation had been cancelled and that the house and little property was all "sequestrated." In the dining-room were half a dozen men and Mr.

Beranek, the former making an inventory and the latter helping them. I asked him in English what it all was, and he said, "Our naturalisation has been cancelled and all I have is put under a 'sequestration.'" I then talked to the head man conducting the affair, who was of course extremely civil and respectful to me. I said that I had been here three and half months, and that personally I could only give the Beraneks an excellent character. But, I asked, was it advisable I should quit, and he said, Oh, no, if I was comfortable here. Not a word was said as to any *accusation* against the Beraneks, simply that their naturalisation was suspended, and that the Republic took over their property: they could not sell anything, not even a bunch of flowers, except through himself as administrator.

They cleared out and left me to my breakfast. I went to Paris to buy some things I wanted for F., and, on my way back, called at his hospital and told him all this. He and I had just lately discussed things here and wondered if everything *was* all square. Some things have seemed to me fishy, and he had agreed with me.

This evening his godmother was there, and she made little of it all, which neither he nor I was inclined to do. I asked him if I had better clear out, and he quite agreed that I had better seriously consider it. She pooh-poohed this, and saw no reason at all for our ideas. I said, "But suppose they were arrested!"

She seemed to think that quite absurd, and very soon I came home and found the faithful Wilcox awaiting me: he told me the house was locked up, and empty, all the three Beraneks, father, mother, and daughter, having been taken away by the police. I had my own key and let myself in, my own rooms were open and nothing touched, *all* the other rooms locked up, even the kitchen, larder, etc. I went out to get some dinner at an hotel, as I could not even make myself a cup of tea here: then I came back and here I am.

It is all very sad, and rather tragic: the empty house, the thought that these folk, who have treated me well, are in prison. I do not pretend to be *certain* that they are innocent, but I hope so. To-morrow I *must* look about for some other quarters, as I can't be bothered to go out for every meal. To-night I stop here, and Wilcox is coming round to sleep here, as I prefer not to stay here quite alone. But even if they are proved innocent (and it is so hard to prove innocence even when innocence is there), it is not likely to be done very promptly: and I cannot stay on here with everything locked up — linen, plates, dishes, knives and forks, kitchen fire and everything.

I wish the nuns, when they recommended the family to me, had told me they were Germans. I should not have come here, for I don't care for Germans and wanted to be with French people, if only for the practice in talking. It was the Beraneks themselves who told me after I had been here awhile that they were only naturalised French — he Bohemian and she German.

I do not *now believe* that they are spies: but, as I said to F. only yesterday, and again to him and Madame M. this evening, I should not dare to say that it is *impossible* they should be. There are certain little things I have mentioned to him, and he, like myself, has thought them odd.

(1) Madame B. goes to Paris once every week and lately oftener, at 2 A.M. *i.e.*, in the middle of the night, returning late in the following afternoon. Of course this is to sell flowers and plants, and may be necessary: but in these times, when they know they are suspected, I think it at least imprudent of them to stick to such a custom. (2) and (3) less odd, but still odd — they never go even into the greenhouses without locking up the house, that is why I have my own key of it, and, as Wilcox noted, the men who come to see Beranek are never received anywhere but in the middle of the garden,

where no one could overhear, and no one could approach without being seen.

(4) and (5). Beranek has been gardener to the Emperor of Russia, and for years to the Austrian Ambassador in Paris. That is so in accord with German methods — to *plant* their spies, and *trans*plant them. Why did the girl stay a fortnight in Switzerland just now, meeting Germans? Of course the little niece had to be sent away, the police insisted, and a child of thirteen could not be sent alone, but I think Mlle. B. would have been wise to take her to Switzerland and come straight back. Perhaps, for a gardener, M. B. is too accomplished a linguist, talking English, French, German, Russian, Polish, Bohemian (Czechi), Bulgarian and Serbian.

Certainly they were *wild* to get me to lodge here: and I have told F. since that it had seemed to me possible that this was because I am an English officer and they thought other English officers would be constantly coming here. At first they seemed quite indifferent about money, but (since *no* English officers ever come here) they have shown an ever-increasing keenness about it.

By this time I expect you are quite sure they *are* spies! I am not a bit: but, I repeat, F. and I have both discussed all this (and the points above detailed) and we have agreed that there *may* be suspicious features. The fact is all Germans are tarred with the same brush and the world has learned that none are above *suspicion*, at all events.

It is a bore to turn out: it is so quiet and peaceful here, and economical: but I expect to-morrow or next day will see me out of this.

I am now dog-sleepy and must go to bed: not without a prayer for these poor folk: it is hard to think of them rushed away from their peaceful and pleasant home to a prison: and they may so well be innocent all the time.

Sunday Evening, August 1, 1915

It is quarter to seven P.M., and I am sitting down to tell you how things are and how *I* am. I am very well, though the fuss of yesterday gave me a rather sleepless night and a morning of neuralgia. That is all finished, and I am quite well.

Young Vicomte de Missiessy came to call half an hour ago and has just gone away: I told him all our history here, and he was ever so much interested — quite excited! — and full of sympathy for the nuisance to myself.

Wilcox came last night and defended me from the ghosts of this empty house; but after Mass I let him go for the day, as his fiancée is only here till to-morrow morning and he may not see her again till after the war, as the family she is with are leaving France till the end of it. He is so devoted and unselfish I felt bound to be unselfish, too.

I lunched at the Hôtel de France on the Place d'Armes, quite close (next door!) to the château, and asked about a room there with "pension": and they agreed to give me a room looking on the Place (it is a huge *empty* space, and quiet) with full pension, including wine, tea, etc., for eleven francs a day, (nine shillings a day); and that is cheap for Versailles. Then I went to see F. (it takes nearly an hour to get there) and came home promising to go and see him again later in the afternoon to tell him if anything new had turned up.

I found here the receiver, as he would be called in England, a very civil man, who begged me to stay on in the house, at least till they have decided what to do with it: if they let it, he said, it should be on condition of my being allowed to retain my apartment if I wished. He gave me the key of the kitchen and of a small dining-room, so that now I can provide myself with the little meals, breakfast, tea, etc. He also gave me access to the house-linen, sheets, towels, napkins, etc., to the

plates, dishes, knives and forks, etc.: all which makes a great difference to my comfort.

In the kitchen, on a loaf, I found a little note from Beranek to his wife (she had not got back from her nocturnal trip to Paris when he and their daughter were arrested). It seemed to me very sad. "Dearest wife: Try not to be broken down. Bring linen. We await you with a thousand kisses. Put on your best clothes." The last touch, because, poor things, they are little likely to see any of their property again.

The question of my going to see them has settled itself, as they were removed last night to Petit Pré in this department (Seine et Oise) to be taken thence to a concentration camp, where they will probably remain till the end of the war. I am told that probably the Government will "administer" this little property till the end of the war, and then sell it all.

So far as I can discover, no definite charges are yet brought against them, but it doesn't follow that none will be brought.

I think it struck me with a peculiar, homely sadness to see the meal, half cooked for yesterday's luncheon, about the kitchen and that no one would ever eat. I said Mass for them to-day, innocent or guilty, and I am bound to say that all who *knew* them, think them quite innocent. I am glad it is to be a concentration camp only, and not a regular prison. No soldiers work in the garden now, but Beranek's foreman (French) seems trying to keep everything going all by himself.

I did go back to F. as I had promised, but only stayed a few minutes. He thinks, as I do, that as the officials are so civil I had better stay on here, at all events a few days, as I may thus hear of something much more suitable than if I dashed off at once. It would bore me to pieces to board in a French family, and Michel de Missiessy says I am quite right; I should have to be talking, talking all day long to the whole family and have no liberty.

Meanwhile I have my house and garden to myself and am lord of all I survey.

8.15 P.M.

I interrupted my letter half an hour ago to get ready and eat my "dinner:" a funny, but not at all bad little meal. I was not inclined to go out to get dinner at a hotel, as the nearest is quite as far from here as you are from the village inn at Winterbourne. This is a residential, aristocratic part of Versailles, far from shops, etc. Well, my dinner consisted of an excellent pot of tea, bread and butter, pâté de foie gras, marmalade, and a splendid pear. So you see I did not starve. I ate it up here in my own room, and left the washing-up to Wilcox when he arrives.

F. said to-day, "I'm so glad you had Wilcox for your servant at this tiresome juncture: he is so steady and prudent, so quiet and so fiercely devoted." All of which is quite true.

I went over the house to-day with the "receiver" ("administrator" in French) and everything is just as it was at the moment of the arrest: the beds unmade, etc: (as it all began quite early in the morning). I am sure the Beraneks, mother and daughter, will be specially hurt at that; they are tidy, orderly, domestic creatures, who do everything themselves because they think servants careless and slip-shod; and they will hate to think of strangers seeing their good rooms all untidy and in disorder. I must say the officials seem to leave everything strictly untouched.

Of course the mere untidiness here is nothing to the awful *havoc* I saw in French houses, as good and better than this, up at the front where the Germans had been: and thence the *certainly innocent* had been driven out homeless by these people's compatriots. *Voilà la guerre!* Even if these folk in this house were as innocent as you are, it is not astonishing if on such as them falls a trouble

similar to and of less cruelty than that which has fallen on thousands and thousands of French and Belgian homes and families up in the huge district (seven whole Departments of France, and nearly the whole of Belgium) where the Germans hold sway. One hard fate doesn't soften another, but at least these people have not been *hastily* disturbed: for twelve months they have been left at peace in their home, and none of them has been wounded or killed: nor can one say that the French police have acted with a harshness that had no reason. For years this family has had this place without seeking naturalisation; when they did go in for it, it was (as the police urge) only when war was certainly known by Germany and Austria to be coming.

You are not to imagine that any sort of *real* annoyance has come to me personally out of all this. In England I might easily have been cited as a witness, which would have annoyed me extremely: but no idea of that sort has occurred to the French officials, who merely showed every anxiety to save me even the inevitable minor inconveniences. I don't think even F. quite twigged what a position an English officer "gradé" (of higher rank) has in France at present. I assured him that no inconvenience would accrue to me personally: and he said, "But perhaps as everything is sequestrated you will have difficulty in removing your own things: a French lodger would."

"Well, I'm not a French lodger," I told him: and the receiver simply laughed when I asked him.

"I hope for your own comfort you will stay where you are," he said, "but if you choose to leave at any hour, pray do, and pack up all your things and take them. I am responsible, and I shall certainly not enter your room or treat it as anything but your room till you give me the key of it." All this has given you two long letters! Some day it may come in useful in a story. Eh? But not "while the war," as the soldiers say. . . . Good night.

Monday Night, August 2, 1915

THE Beraneks have *not* been merely interned in a concentration camp, but have been imprisoned in a fortress, and that means that there are grave charges against them. It seems they have been under surveillance a long time.

For the next few days, at all events, I shall remain in this house, but I have heard now of several quarters recommended to me and to-morrow will go and inspect them.

You mustn't picture me quite alone in my garden house, for, there are nearly fifty soldiers in the *grenier* adjoining, a Marechal de Logis (cavalry sergeant) and his wife in a loft, their orderly in another, and the ever-faithful Wilcox, who is here all night and nearly all day.

He complained of pain in his jaw and I sent him to Chavasse, who X-rayed him, and discovered that the jaw was broken.

He is quite excellent as an *emergency* servant, does housemaid, cook (kitchen-maid, perhaps, under a Right Reverend chef), caterer, etc., and all very well. The picnic is rather fun and *he* thinks it "champion."

Tuesday Evening, August 3, 1915

YOUR letter of Saturday arrived to-day, and the beginning of it made me laugh at you! You say it was a relief ("a great relief," I beg your pardon) to get my letter that morning — why? because you had no letter on Thursday, and on Friday only a number of postcards addressed by me and accompanied by a little writing; *i.e.*, there was only one day without any word of my continued existence, etc. That's the worst of being a first-rate correspondent: if a day comes when one is too busy to get in a letter, or too lazy to write one, or too tired, then you feel it your duty to be anxious!

You have often said, "Don't write when you feel tired or too busy." I take you at your word one day and you are anxious. Please don't! Suppose I got an order to move to Havre, or Calais, or Dieppe or Rouen: such orders (I expect none of the kind) come suddenly and one has to go off at once. Then there would have to be an interval of several days without your hearing from me: and I should have the uncomfortable certainty that you were tormenting yourself.

Here endeth the sermon.

(On turning the sheet I find it is one on which I had begun writing some French pronunciations for Wilcox, but I can't begin again.)

I am flourishing, and enjoying our picnicky life in our Garden House. I have nothing new to report about the owners of it, and hardly expect to hear any more. Of course I often think of them, and of the sadness of it all for them, and wonder if they will ever see this home of theirs again: but then one cannot help feeling that if they *are* guilty they hardly deserve any compassion. If they *are* guilty they have played a certain game, and a very bad one, and have lost it. Very likely one never *will* know whether they were guilty or innocent: but even if they should be judged innocent I can't imagine their ever caring to come back here whence they were removed as prisoners and spies. It's a dismal subject and we can change it. I need only say that for the present I shall stay on where I am. The place suits me, and I am comfortable, and Wilcox is in a state of beatitude looking after me. He cooks quite well, and is *extremely* clean in all his ways.

I worked hard all morning at the hospital, a new batch of wounded having come in, though a small one, then home to a very good luncheon cooked and served by Wilcox; then, as I had not to go and see F., a long rest, reading, and . . . and . . . and sleeping: then out again: home to a rather late tea, and that's all.

My young Jew went off to-day and was really sorry to go: he said often how impossible it would be to find a better hospital in England, or to have more skilled attention and nursing, or *kinder*. It so seldom occurs to either officers or men among the wounded to see that and to express appreciation of it all. I shall quite miss him when going round the wards, he was always eagerly looking out for me, and so cheery and bright in his talk.

It is certainly not autumnal here, though cool (with frequent torrential showers to-day) and though (being weeks ahead of England as to season) some autumn flowers and fruits are in full swing: autumn plums, pears: autumn anemones, dahlias, etc.

Yesterday (it is now Wednesday A.M.) I went and looked at several lodgings — only a single room each, rather a come-down after this Garden House all to myself with its big garden, etc. One lodging I rather fancied, kept by a very decent elderly woman who informed me that she was almost English — because her son is cook to Queen Alexandra.

I do not think *any* of your letters go astray, all reach me safely: I wonder why you seem suddenly taken with an idea that I do not get them.

I must explain that furnished lodgings here *do not supply any meals or attendance*, so that if I move from this house I shall only move into another *house* and a less attractive one, with no advantage that I lack here.

Wednesday, 7 P.M., *August* 4, 1915

I SIT down to this table to write without the faintest idea whence anything to write about is to come: but once St. Dominic sat down, and with him all his friars, at another table on which there was nothing to eat, and he knew and they knew that there was nothing to eat in the house, and not a coin among them all to buy any-

thing with. But St. Dominic said, "Little brothers, this is our hour for sitting down to table: so let us keep our rule, and so gain the merit of obedience, even though nothing for our mouths should come of it." So he blest the empty table as though it had been piled with cates, and while he blest it angels set bread upon it.

This is my hour for sitting down to *my* little table to write to you, and though I seem to have nothing in my head, I will trust that something may slip into my pen by some good-natured angel's suggestion. Of that scene in the dim refectory, with the group of hungry and obedient friars, there is a lovely fresco, by Fra Bartolomeo, I think. Only the white habits of the friars, against the dusk, are the same in it; the faces are all different, the features, the expression; but on them all the same calm and confident obedience.

After luncheon to-day I went out to F.'s hospital to see him, and on the way met Lady Austin-Lee coming to visit *our* hospital. We talked for half an hour, and I need not tell you how excited she was by the Beranek tragedy. "It will all come into a novel some day," she declared, "and I'm sure that as it *was* to happen, you feel a certain poignant satisfaction in having been so near-hand a witness of it." . . . She begs F. and me to lunch with *her* on Monday next. I found him up and allowed to walk in the garden: and while we were there the Mother General of the Order came by, wheeling a heavy wheel-barrow full of plants, which I insisted on pushing for her. There was a great deal of laughing; she protesting that it was scandalous for *me* to wheel barrows, and I protesting that it was much worse that she should — of course I appealed to the nuns, who didn't know what to decide, and could only laugh. She said, "I was tired of correspondence and work indoors, and thought it would rest me to garden a little." I told her how much *you* would sympathize with her, and she and

her nuns soon went on with their planting. F. said, "They are such cheery creatures, and they chaff each other all day."

He told me he had sent you a little *poupée*, which he ordered from his home, dressed in the peasant costume of the Doubs. He was in excellent spirits, and evidently pleased to get Lady Austin-Lee's invitation for Monday, by which time he will be allowed to go out. They have nobbled me to pontificate High Mass on the Feast of the Assumption in the church always called "La Paroisse" because it is the parish church of the château. Louis XIV built it, and Louis XV made his First Communion in it. I tried to get out of this function, and hypocritically suggested that the Bishop might not like it. "Oh, but he is delighted at the idea."

I then said that some of the necessary paraphernalia were in England, but they said, "Oh, we have them all." The mitre will probably be that of some old bishop of two centuries ago with a head as big as a pumpkin, out of which only my ankles will be visible to the public.

I must stop: it is so "darksome" (as the old-fashioned Catholics still say) that I cannot see to write, and only 7.50 P.M.

Many thanks for the pretty picture of Ellesmere.

With best love to Christie and Alice.

Friday A.M., *August* 6, 1915

I WENT to Paris yesterday to buy some special bandages for F., was away from midday till evening, and made a pilgrimage to the immense votive Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the heights of Montmartre. It is really very fine, and the position, towering over Paris (one has to go up in a funicular railway), is superb: the view from the portico of the church quite magnificent. I enclose two cards, one of a little old building which was all there was on the summit of Montmartre till 1866, and one of

the basilica. The other photographs are all of Notre Dame de Paris, and possibly you have them all.

It kept fine all day, and only just as I got home did it begin to rain — in a deluge, and went on all night.

Before starting for Paris I went to look at two lodgings, in case I cannot stay on here: they each consisted of a single room, a good room, well furnished as a bedroom, and each cost (without any food, or attendance) ninety francs a month, *i.e.*, three francs a day: one's food at an hotel or restaurant would cost ten francs, at least, a day, and there would be the bother of *going out* for every meal, no matter what the weather. I shall certainly stay on here if I can: without Wilcox it would be impossible, but he is quite excellent, and I am in great comfort in his care.

Now I'm off to hospital.

Friday Evening, August 6, 1915

Your letter of Tuesday arrived to-day, enclosing Mr. Maurice Egan's card. He is one of the most admired Catholic writers, and he is also American Ambassador to the Court of Denmark. Besides all which he is really a thoroughly nice man, and we have had a corresponding acquaintance for a good many years. Sir Rennell Rodd, our own Ambassador in Rome, was his colleague, as British Minister at Copenhagen, and has often told me how charming a man Mr. Maurice Egan is. Do you remember some years ago Mr. Egan inviting me to the marriage of his daughter?

It has been very showery all day, and rather stuffy. I went to see F., and coming back it rained in torrents.

Since I began writing a lovely sunset has turned all the sky to fiery snow-mountains. The rain is gone and it looks like the promise of a fine day to-morrow.

F. read aloud English sentences to me, and it was very funny. They represented a conversation between an

English traveller and a French railway-porter: and I think this time some of the funniness was intentional — the composer of the phrase-book meaning to laugh gently at John Bull. This sort of thing (E. T. — English Traveller. R. P. — Railway Porter):

E. T. Porter! Porter! Hi, you! Come here!
R. P. Monsieur?
E. T. Put this luggage in a first-class carriage. Quick now!
R. P. All this! How many persons are you?
E. T. How many persons? I am one person, can't you see?
R. P. But one person cannot have all those luggages in the carriage wiz 'eem.
E. T. "All that luggage!" Why, there are only four valises, eight small parcels, two guns, three fishing-rods, two rolls of rugs, and two of overcoats and waterproofs, a dressing-case, a dispatch-box, a lunch-basket, and this bundle of books and newspapers. Put them in at once.
R. P. But, Monsieur, there will be no rooms for the luggage of the other passengers.
E. T. That doesn't matter, for I prefer a carriage all myself.
R. P. There are ten places in the carriage; has Monsieur taken ten places, then?
E. T. Head block! Put them in, while you ask questions the train will go.
R. P. Has Monsieur taken 'is tee-ket?
E. T. Plenty of time. Put them in.

(The porter puts them in)

Railway Engine: St-st-st- Jub-jub. . . .
R. P. Ze train go: Monsieur will not be to can go, having no tee-ket. . . .
E. T. Quick! Quick! Let me jump in!

R. P. It is forbade to get in while the train moves, it is forbidden to get in wizout tee-ket. . . .

E. T. (Furiously) There . . . the train has gone, and my luggage. . . . Damn! Oh yes! Damn! Quite so. Very much, Damn!

F. said to me, "It is very bad. In England you are always divorcing yourselves."

I had a letter from Beranek to-day, which I shall answer very cautiously. He says, "It is hard to be dishonoured after a harmless life: but our sorrow and shame are in His hands, who decides what each of us has to bear."

Wilcox is often entertaining in a dry way, but he doesn't set up for a wit, and says uncommonly little at all. He is shy and reserved, and when he is funny it is because something comes out which shows what a shrewd, watchful observer he is. He is devoted to F. and says, "The Baron gives me lumps in my throat whenever I see him. So young, and just hopping lame about like a bird with its leg and wing broke! He's a toff if you like, and always so nice and so gentle, with a kind word for a chap like me. In our regiment there are real officer toffs, and second-hand toffs — you can always tell. But Baron C.'s the best I ever saw."

Saturday Evening, August 7, 1915

I PERCEIVE that I have, during the last day or two, been dating my letters (as to the day of the month) a day in arrear. . . .

To begin with the weather, and so prove myself still English, it has been stuffy all day, and is more stuffy now than ever; I expect we shall have thunder, but the thunder-storms never come to much here, nor do they cool the air much.

I saw the administrator (receiver) this morning and have agreed to stay on here for the present: they make

me pay a very low rent, whereas all the furnished lodgings I have looked at were dearer than I could afford, and none of them provided meals indoors. So Wilcox and I will reign on here, and it is the arrangement I greatly prefer. After this airy and open place, with the big, cheerful garden, all the lodgings in *streets* seemed so stuffy and dark, gloomy and airless. Besides, I am near the hospital and near the convent where I say Mass when I do not say it in hospital; and, finally, I am like a cat that hates to move. And here I do not have to go out for any meal, as I should in any of the lodgings: for none of them give board. In wet weather especially that going out for every meal would be a terrible nuisance.

I had your two letters dated Tuesday, this morning, and I am so grieved to find that my news of the upset here had upset you, too. It is quite all right now, and I have had no discomfort even, largely because Wilcox is so sensible, systematic, devoted, and energetic.

I hope that long before now my letters will have shown you that nothing that has happened here caused me any *personal* discomfort. For the Beraneks it has been very sad, if they be quite innocent as they may so well be. It is *not* true that they are in a fortress, though the news came from the General in command here; they are only in an "Asile of Detention": and the fact of their being removed there does not in itself imply any definite accusation, only "suspicion." It is useless arguing out all that, as one can really know nothing.

I am sending you to-day under another cover a series of excellent views of Plas Newydd, the house of the Ladies of Llangollen, that a Welsh bookseller sent me. It is extraordinary to myself to see how *perfectly* I remember the place, though it is fully fifty-two years since I saw it, and perhaps only saw the *inside* once. The man who sent them is an admirer of John Ayscough and knows he was once living at Llangollen.

I am rather pestered lately with French ladies who

want to make me a sort of governess and boarding-house agent, and I fancy they are all sent by a nun at the convent.

. . ."It is to-morrow morning" (as Mr. Pecksniff said, putting his head out of the coach window!), *i.e.*, 6 A.M., Sunday, and I have written the last half of this in my pyjamas before beginning to dress: which I must now do.

As you will have perceived for yourself, I have nothing to say, and have not been able successfully to disguise the fact.

Monday Night, August 9, 1915

I WENT with F. to Paris to-day to lunch with Lady Austin-Lee. Our party consisted of herself and us, and Comtesse d'Osmoy (pronounced Daumois), whom we both had met there before. Sir Henry was away in his island of Jethou, opposite the harbour of Guernsey. Madame d'Osmoy is charming, an American, though a very English one.

We were all very pleasant together and had an excellent luncheon. Afterwards we talked and then Lady Austin-Lee sang. She sings really beautifully, and has been accustomed to sing with great masters of music.

When we were waiting for the tram to come back to Versailles, a young woman tried to get into another tram close to us while it was moving and she fell. There was a cry of horror from the people, and I felt quite sick, it seemed so certain she would be killed before our eyes. The tram caught her dress, and dragged her, and between the tram and the rather high kerb there were only a few inches of room: but they managed to stop the huge tram almost instantly, and the woman was not hurt at all, only frightened. I had dashed forward to help, but all I had to do was to pick up her combs and her little parcels. It was a ghastly moment, but no harm came of it.

Tuesday A.M.

It lightened all night, and there were growls of distant thunder, but it has done very little toward cooling the air, or clearing the atmosphere.

I hope *you* won't have it very hot, as it knocks you up too, though you are apt to forget that the moment the heat has changed into rain and a cloudy sky.

I FORGOT to put a date — it is *Wednesday evening, August 11th*, and it is also 6.45 P.M. I daresay you are sitting out in the garden, for I hope it is a fine evening with you as it is here: fine and not hot, fresh and not muggy.

As I came in just now there was a very big butterfly hovering over the geraniums, buff (not yellow or sulphur-colour), almost a pale brown, with black edges to the wings, and black bars and splotches. He seemed very tame and almost let me catch him with my fingers as he sat on a flower.

I went to see F. after lunch (all morning I was in hospital, doing a little work), but he was out, so I came back into the town and went to see Madame de Missiessy, whom I found at home; I sat for a long time talking to her and her daughter, in English, and they were both very *homey* and pleasant.

The Comtesse said, "You must come and dine again," and I answered, "Very well; but I like talking like this: one does not need a plate to talk over," and she seemed to like that, and be pleased that I shouldn't be the sort of man who will only come when you feed him.

They have lived in Versailles about a year, before which they lived in Paris, and left it because she says that till the war came, everyone was living *so high*, and spending so much, she could not keep up with it. Before the Paris time they lived in Savoy (not Italian Savoy, but French Savoy, up among the mountains near Aix)

in a château lent to them by her husband's brother: there they lived a very simple country life ("like peasants," she said), all very happy together, making their pleasures consist of country things. And now they do not care for Versailles, and do not go in for its society, only knowing a few old and tried friends settled here. She says I am very wise in not letting myself be dragged into Versailles "society," which is all idleness and gossip. I don't pretend to be a miracle of penetration, but I do think that I have certain "*protective instincts*" (as some animals have) that warn me what to avoid. No one told me anything about Versailles society, but I "twigged" it, from the very look of the place.

Even the Bishop, who is really a *great* man, is not well liked by the Versailles "society": simply because he is large-minded and liberal in his ideas, and also because he is a *people's* bishop. The diocese is enormous and hugely populated, with a vast working-class population, and he has neither time nor inclination for the fuss of "society." He is sure to be promoted to an Archbishopric, and probably to the Cardinalate; the *Church* approves him, but the "world" — the little tin-pot world of Versailles — does not.

At the de Missiessy's this afternoon I imitated Monsieur G. limping up to nab me for luncheon: and I made such an ugly face that their huge dog leapt up with a howl and nearly swallowed me, grimace and all. He is so enormous that when I saw him first I thought he was a sofa with a woolly rug thrown over him.

As I was going to the de Missiessy's, I saw a small crowd outside a much smaller police-station, and one rather large man being hauled into it by the gendarmes. Some amiable women got him in by strong pushes against the broad base of his back. I asked what he had done. "Oh," said an intensely interested boy, "he tapped on a soldier." I suppose he tapped too hard.

I remember the old Bishop of Amycla telling me of an

Irish soldier who was being tried for manslaughter. He said, "Well, I was coming back to camp in the moonlight, and I saw a head on the ground, sticking out of a tent, and one always kicks things lying about like that, so *I* did: and it killed the chap the head belonged to." The jury acquitted him, saying that he merely yielded to a natural impulse. But I doubt if a French jury will think it a natural impulse to tap on a soldier.

It is only seven-forty, and I have had to light my lamp; even in the window it had grown too dark to write. Wilcox has been writing to *his* mother downstairs, and has just brought up his letter for me to read. At first he used to bring me his love-letters to read too, and *excellent* they were, full of wonderful, manly and pure love and devotion. But to read them even at his desire seemed to me like eavesdropping, and I told him no one should see them before the girl to whom they were written. I think I must be growing like a spider who spins long lines out of his own inside, for out of mine, with nothing like news to help me, I am daily spinning you lines which reach from Versailles to Winterbourne.

I'm so glad you approve of our staying on in our Garden House. I was half-afraid you would think I should be gloomy here. I have two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a nice little dining-room, opening into the *private* garden (not the nursery-garden), with plate, china, glass, house-linen, etc., and I pay — what? Well, I bargained: I pointed out that an English Colonel and his soldier-servant made excellent care-takers, and the administrator quite agreed. "Would one franc fifty a day be too much?" he asked, and I said, "Not at all too much." One shilling threepence a day! F. was quite awe-struck by my capacity for affairs when I told him. He never dreams of enquiring the price before buying anything: and I told him I couldn't afford to be so lordly.

Comtesse d'Osmoy was asking for you yesterday. "I shall always remember her miniature," she said.

And every time I look up there it is, hanging a foot from my nose — the *end* of my nose, about three feet from my face.

Comtesse de Missiessy said to-day, "I always say some little prayers now, every day, for your dear mother, and beg Our Lord to keep her well and full of courage till she can have you with her again. My prayers are very little prayers, but I have been only a mother since my dear, dear husband left me, and I know what it must be."

"So does He, dear Madame."

"Ah, yes. That is what must keep you both brave."

I told her how poor we were when you were left with your three children to bring up, and how happy you made our childhood, so that it never occurred to us to think with envy of rich children. "In fact," I said, "I don't know if rich children ever do enjoy things as poor gentry's children do."

"I'm sure they don't," said she, "they are blasé and peevish: and they have so many expensive things to do that they do not care for any of them."

You see we are always talking of you. Now I *will* stop.

Friday Evening, 6.30 P.M., *August* 13, 1915

WINIFRED GATER sent me two *excellent* little photographs of you, in your bath-chair, and I have written at once to thank her: it was a very kind thought of hers, and I was really grateful. The oblong-shaped portrait has the expression you assume when I have just told you some amazing fable, and the other, the upright-shaped one, has the other expression that you put on when you have done something bad (like walking off to the garden alone) and don't intend to repent.

This afternoon I tried to go for a walk, and had just got into the gardens of the château when it came down a pelt, and I had to trot home: several kindly French

women dashed out of shops as I came through the Rue de la Paroisse to offer umbrellas, but in uniform one may not carry umbrellas as I had to explain.

All the flat parterres near the Orangerie, under the palace windows, are filled with calceolarias, and they look like a vast yellow carpet, of geometric pattern, with dark green borders (box).

I myself, on my way home, looked like a dripping statue escaped from one of the fountains: but I changed at once, and was not wet inside (I don't mean inside my body, but inside my tunic).

It is quite fine again now, with a pretty parti-coloured sky.

A little French soldier whom I knew at the front, and to whom I have sent parcels since, came to see me the other day — straight from the front, on his way home — and he was so fearfully smelly, poor fellow, that when he had gone, Wilcox (who is the cleanest man I ever knew) said, "Anyone would think one of the trenches had been to call in this room." I must say I had suffered considerably myself. It was a hot afternoon and the soldier had walked fast in his huge, heavy *capote*. All the same, it was nice of him to come.

Monday, 9.45 A.M., *August* 16, 1915

I WROTE you a *very* meagre and short letter on Saturday night, and even that poor apology for a letter never went by yesterday's post — I was so rushed all day that I overlooked it.

I got up at five and said my "office," dressed, etc.; at 7.30 said Mass at the hospital, at ten pontificated the High Mass at Notre Dame, ran home to do some business, lunched with the clergy at twelve, pontificated Vespers (followed by Procession, Benediction, etc.) at two, had some tea, and then held evening service at the hospital.

I got on very well at my two functions, and the church

was *packed* each time — between two and three thousand persons. It was terribly hot in church, and the vestments very heavy, but I did not feel it *in the least*, a sign of my being in excellent health. I had dreaded one of my awful neuralgia attacks, but had not a touch of it. The luncheon party did not bore me at all either; there were only three other priests, and they were nice.

I saw F. after Mass, and Lady Austin-Lee has again invited us both to lunch with her on Wednesday: on Thursday she is going on a short visit to Normandy to stay with Comtesse d'Osmoy.

I am delighted that Alice has not actually fled yet, though alas! her departure seems close at hand. I know how much you will miss her, and I shall not be *half* so easy in my mind about you now. O dear! I wish I could get home!

Well, my dear, I *must* go and work at the hospital.

Monday Evening, 7.15, *August* 16, 1915

THOUGH it is only a quarter-past seven, it is already nearly too dark to write at my window: and in a few minutes I shall have to drag my table back into the room and light my lamp.

This morning was almost cold, but by midday it had grown hot again; still, it is *autumny*.

F. was to have come this afternoon at 2.30, but didn't turn up: I waited in for him, and wrote duty letters — twelve of them to English, French, and American correspondents. So, though I was sorry not to get a walk, I did a lot of business. I did a long morning in the hospital, and felt I deserved a walk after luncheon to blow away cobwebs and homesickness!

(I have already had to desert my window and light up for the evening.) It was a year yesterday since I left home to come out to this rotten old war: and in my innocent soul I thought then the war would all be over in

a few weeks! Still, dear, one cannot help reflecting how much God has done for us: no harm befell me up at the front: and I am well and comfortable: and He has preserved you wonderfully in health and on the whole in good spirits. Times of low spirits must come occasionally; nevertheless, on the whole your courage and trust have sustained you, and for that I am unspeakably grateful.

I am so glad you liked the little veil; it seemed to me pretty, and I am sure you will turn it to *some* use.

I told you that I got on all right at the two functions yesterday, which I had quite dreaded. The mitre *was* enormous and would have been a *mask*, only the Master of Ceremonies poised it on my *ears:* at Vespers they had stitched it up, and it fitted beautifully. The music was fine, but too grandiose and florid for my taste; only the professional singers took any part.

However, they were all pleased and I was much thanked.

I think you rather take it for granted that the Beraneks *were* guilty: I don't at all; I merely think that there was enough to justify the police in taking action, *i.e.*, that they were not bullying, but merely taking precaution to be on the safe side. I find it really was because of the girl's journey to Switzerland that the arrest took place: the police went with her, stayed near her all the time in Switzerland, came back with her, and on the next day arrested all the family. She was with Germans the whole time — but then it was to hand over the young cousin to her parents, and it was the police themselves who gave the order that the little girl should not remain here: so the Beraneks *had* to send her away, and they could hardly send a child of thirteen to Switzerland, in war time, all by herself. What seemed to me so imprudent was Mlle. Beranek staying on in Switzerland a fortnight, as that could not be necessary.

One thing very much against the spy theory is this: from the beginning *I* have had one key of the letter box,

and I can't imagine a spy family risking any dangerous letters falling into a stranger's hands; and as I opened the box, which is at the gate, every time I passed in or out, they must have known that no letter of theirs would be likely to escape my notice.

Tuesday A.M.

It is a regular white fog, with an autumn chill in the air and yet no doubt by midday it will be ever so hot.

I hear the Russians are doing very well, also that *we* are, and also that immense numbers of fresh English troops have come over to reinforce our line; so we are evidently going to do something interesting.

Since I wrote the above I have said Mass and had breakfast, and the fog has all gone and it is a morning of brilliant sun and blue sky.

And now this snappy and disjointed letter must be shut up: I wish I could shut myself inside it, and go with it.

Courage and patience! I *shall* be going one of these days.

Tuesday Evening, August 17, 1915

HERE I am again at my window, beginning a letter to you, this time early enough to have some hopes of finishing it before it gets too dark to write without the lamp. What to tell you is another matter! I did a good morning's work in hospital, seeing a number of new arrivals, almost all of the Leinster Regiment, and hardly any of them *very* severely wounded. They all seemed very glad to see me, and were glad to get prayer-books, rosaries, scapulars, etc.

I meant to go for a walk in the park after luncheon, but only read instead.

I got your letter of Saturday this morning, and am glad you liked mine of Wednesday, and that you were

amused by it; also that you think the de Missiessy family sounds nice. They *are* nice, very like an English family of good class. They asked F. to go and see them, but he won't: he *has* to admit that Comtesse de M. is charming, but for some reason he can't abide Mademoiselle, and I perceive that it is mutual. However, I don't take any notice. I wish he *would* go, because he might pick up some nice young men friends there; all the young men I met there are of good class and nice. Oddly enough, I have never met any *man* friend of his who was a gentleman or *nearly* one: and I think he likes having inferior men-comrades, as they toady to him: and all the while he is a bit ashamed of them, for if any of them come to see him when I am with him, he always seems relieved and glad that I get up to come away as soon as I can do so without rudeness. Of each of these friends he has invariably said (afterwards), "He is a very good fellow, but not a gentleman."

"Oh," say I, "you need not tell me that: though I am English I know a French gentleman very well when I see him."

I fancy the big school he was at was a *commercial* school, and that he had never mixed with young fellows of good class; and so now he is *shy* of them. His absolute *dislike* of visiting places and things of historic interest is extremely unlike the ordinary taste of Frenchmen of position, who are generally particularly fond of seeing and talking about such things. But it is no use complaining because one's friend has not one's own tastes. I always knew we had scarcely a taste in common: he hates reading, and has no appreciation of any art except music: pictures are quite uninteresting and meaningless to him. We have had heaps of battles about this — for when I have been with him in Paris I wanted to take the opportunity of seeing the many things of historic and artistic interest there, but he simply *won't* (and you know our young gentleman can be obstinate) and never

cares for anything except shopping or sauntering along the crowded boulevards.

I only grumble to *you*, who know how fond I am of him; but really I have sacrificed countless hours to his tastes—or lack of tastes—to please and cheer him, when I personally detested this idle waste of time. He has very good brains and it often fills me with regret to see how he lets them run to seed. I wish he was well enough to *work*, but he is not, and it's no use thinking of it. I fancy *only* the higher aristocracy do read in France, among the others there are *no* books; and I noted often the same thing up at the front. In no house where we billeted were there any books, though often the houses were excellently furnished and evidently belonged to people with plenty of money to spend.

Do you still get books from Boots' library in Salisbury? Whenever I get back to writing I don't think I shall want to write *anything* to do with the War. If I could I should forget it!

I had a letter of very grateful thanks from my young Jew, who has gone home; at least he has gone to Ireland (London is his home) and he writes from Dublin Castle, where he sleeps in the throne room! I must answer him as soon as I can find a moment for it.

I am sure Madame de Missiessy would love to have anything you made for her: but were you not expecting some more "pieces" from Hampton's? If so, wait till they come and make her a pretty bag for work. All the time she and her girl talk they are working, which is not the French way at all: as a matter of fact, she is Belgian, only her husband was French. I told them I had described to you the little procession of children and friends on the night of her birthday, when they all gave her their gifts of flowers, bonbons, etc., and they said, "Oh, that is not French at all. It is a Belgian custom, and our French relatives and friends laugh at it."

At the —— on Saturday the other guests were a refugee

family from Lille (in German hands), a father about thirty-four, a mother about twenty-eight, and two little boys of twelve and seven. They were pretty little creatures, but how they ate! I thought their little stomachs would crack. The lady, who had excellent teeth, smiled incessantly, but did not say much: she was rather pretty, but had powdered herself so profusely that her face looked like a rissole waiting to be fried.

Now I must stop: my letters grow duller every day: but since the tragic disappearance of the Beraneks nothing has happened.

A Scots officer in hospital told me this yarn to-day.

A Scottish laird sent for his gardener and said, "Fergusson, I'm given to know that you go about saying I'm a mean fellow, and not much of a gentleman!"

"Na, na, laird," says Fergusson, "I'm nane o' that talkin' sort: I ay keep my opinion to myself."

The small cutting below someone gave to Wilcox:

"*A Notre-Dame*

— Dimanche 15 *août, en l'église Notre-Dame, à Versailles, à dix heures du matin, une messe pontificale a été célébrée par Mgr. Bickersfatte-Drew, protonotaire apostolique, aumônier de l'hôpital militaire anglais de Trianon-Palace.*

Mgr. Bickersfatte est un converti qui s'est fait un nom comme romancier catholique à côté des Newmann et des Benson."

I have not really changed my name to Bickersfatte!

The said Wilcox is nearly all right again, and I think he will box no more.

I duly received the "Christmas Books" by Thackeray, and have already read "Our Street," "Mrs. Perkin's Ball," and "The Kickleburys on the Rhine,"—passable but quite second-rate stuff; and if I had been Lady Ritchie I should have refused to re-publish them side by side with her father's really great books. None of these

papers have the least inspiration or illumination; they have only a certain waspish sharpness, and that so reiterated that it becomes stale and tedious.

How Thackeray hated the Irish and libelled them! I wonder some big Hibernian did not larrup him: but then Thackeray was very big, too.

I must stop now to write and thank a lady who has sent me a large box of sweets for the soldiers: they like them very much, almost better than cigarettes.

This is a deadly dull letter, but *I* am dull, with all the cotton-woolliness of a cold still in my head.

I like to think of all your prayers for me, and know they must be heard: don't get discouraged!

Wednesday Evening, August 25, 1915

I HAVE written so many letters this evening that I am nearly at the end of my writing tether. I had tea early and started writing directly after.

The day has been about as eventful as usual. Mass at eight, breakfast 9.30, hospital till 1, luncheon 1.15, then a read and a rest on my bed, then letters till tea, then more letters.

One of the poor fellows in hospital (not a Catholic) has lost both hands and his sight. He is so brave and patient and cheerful. What must *his* poor mother feel!

One of my own patients has temporarily lost both speech and hearing through the explosion of a big shell quite close to him — he received no wound at all. I had to talk with him by writing in a copy-book: he is only twenty and rather a merry-looking lad.

I wonder if you realise how homesick I am! I am tired to death of Versailles, though I don't want any move except to move home.

What I miss in *all* these minor books of Thackeray's is the note of pathos: there are plenty of wonderful

threads of pathos in "Vanity Fair" and "The Newcomes," and "The Virginians" (especially), but not an atom in these short tales; only a grim, ruthless, scoffing sarcasm and sour fun: and the unrelieved fun ceases to amuse.

At five o'clock I was saying my rosary for you and picturing you sitting in the garden: it was just the day for it.

I must stop: my brain is woolly (and so is my pen).

Thursday Evening, August 26, 1915

I RECEIVED your letter of Monday this morning, and not long afterwards went to Paris in the tram, going first to an English chemist's in the Champs Elysées to get some phenacetin, as I had one of my goes of neuralgia. Then to an exhibition of ancient tapestry, lace and ecclesiastical plate saved from Rheims and from various places, such as Ypres, in Flanders.

The tapestry and lace were *most* magnificent: I had never seen such "important" specimens of lace anywhere, enormous pieces as big as a side-board cloth, *i.e.*, perhaps five yards long and one to two yards deep. The *most* beautiful was an immense piece of Point D' Argentan, the design quite entrancingly lovely, and in absolutely perfect condition, but there were also equally splendid and huge pieces of Venice point (with raised design) Venice point with flat design, Mechlin point, Brussels, Point d'Alençon, and countless Spanish and other laces new to me. As to the tapestries they were vast, and quite glorious: *what* a blessing they were removed from Rheims, Ypres, etc.

Then I went to Lady Austin-Lee and had an excellent lunch. Sir H. seemed well and in good spirits. They have been wonderfully nice to me, and of boundless hospitality: and she always speaks *of* me to others with extreme affection.

I should have enjoyed myself better if I had not had

a splitting headache all day, which is, I am glad to say, now gone. Paris on a blazing August day is *not* the best cure for a headache: not that it is noisy, or stuffy: its streets are wonderfully quiet for a great city, and the spaces are so huge and open there is plenty of air. Still, I think, the air of vehement movement and bustle makes a headache much worse.

I must go to dinner.

Saturday Night, August 28, 1915

It has been hotter than ever all day to-day, with the sort of heat I specially dislike: a thick, dirty-feeling heat, without any visible sun. A sort of sirocco, in fact. F. came this afternoon and asked me to take him round to see our hospital, which I did. While we were going through the wards Lady Austin-Lee came in, and asked us both to luncheon again for next Thursday: is she not hospitable?

I received enclosed from Lady Glenconner, which you may like to read: I had written to her a few days ago, when feeling particularly homesick, demanding one of her long letters to interest and cheer me up. Poor woman, I think it needs all her courage, and sense of duty to England, to keep her up against the anxiety of having both her elder boys out in the war: Bim at the front in this country, and Christopher, younger still, on his ship in the Dardanelles. And, though she seems very happy in her daughter's marriage, still the loss of a third child, and the only girl, from the home must make the circle very small now. Besides it seems to me that the marrying of one's daughter must make a woman feel *old:* I don't suppose she is forty yet, at which age many spinsters are called girls! But with the probability of being a grandmother in a year or so one can hardly think of oneself as a girl. She is really a *friend* and her cleverness and Wyndham brilliance, and her many

affairs never make her overlook the absent, or make them "out of sight, out of mind." I do hope and pray no harm may come to her boys: but the Guards have all through this war suffered terribly, and I see she is full of dread.

I sent you "The Sacristans" this morning, and a cutting from a Yankee paper calling it a very fine story. I remember, when I wrote it, thinking it a good bit of work, but I was too lazy to read it again before sending it to the *Catholic World*, and entirely forgot what it is about. I think I remember that it was rather grim and tragic.

You write about my unselfishness — well, I always think one can (if one has any sense) know one's own faults and their opposites as well as anyone else can know them: and I don't think I am selfish, only I demand affection for affection, and when I fail to get it, then I am sore and perhaps unreasonable. What I mean is this — I expect I try to *buy* affection by acts of what people call unselfishness, and *real* unselfishness wants nothing, not even affection or gratitude.

Though I told you that to-day's heat is the sort I dislike, it has not tried me at all, a proof that I am well. I have not, for a long time now, had any more of that tired, languid feeling.

F. returned to the charge to-day about trying to make me go to pontificate vespers for the nuns at his hospital to-morrow. I fancy he had *promised* to make me do it, and his obstinacy was engaged! Three times he returned to the charge, and at last he said, "You don't know how much I am annoyed at your continued refusal." Then I said, "My dear boy: I do not *want* to tell you how much it annoys *me* that you will continue to make me refuse. When I intend to do anything I am asked I say 'Yes' at once. I do not refuse three or four times in order to say 'Yes' at last."

The little lavender-bags are so sweet and charming:

I keep one for myself, and I gave some to some of the nursing sisters in the hospital, who were delighted to get them. Wilcox got one which he promptly sent home to be kept among his treasures. He has a profound veneration for you!

I fill my letters with very uninteresting talk . . . but there is nothing to tell you! My life is as monotonous as a cuckoo's song, and if cuckoos wrote daily letters to their parents one would pity the parents. I am to go to dinner, and so good night.

Monday, 8 A.M., *August* 30, 1915

I AM only going to say a hurried "good morning," and then am going off on a long day's pleasuring. Our hospital has, for the moment, very few patients, and consequently one can get away for a whole day nearly without omitting any duty: and I am off to Fontainebleau. It is a fine, but cool, morning, and I have always been *talking* of this trip to Fontainebleau. It is thirty miles on the other side of Paris, and so one has to make an early start from here if one intends to get back the same evening, as I do.

The rain I hoped for on Saturday night duly arrived, and yesterday was a lovely, clear, cool, clean-aired day, sunny and with a blue sky: before we had had great heat, with (often) a clouded sky, or a hot haze.

. . . I must shut up or I shall miss my train.

Wednesday Evening, 5.30, *September* 1, 1915

I SENT you such a mean little letter to-day that now I must try to make up by sending you one of decent length, though I do not know at all what I am to make it out of . . .

I duly received the second little letter-case which I will bestow on some deserving object!

It is only half-past five, and nearly dusk, because the sky is covered with dark clouds, and I expect we shall have a wet night, but the day has been fine and bright though very cool. After writing to you I must write to Lady Glenconner, or she will think me ungrateful, as she obeyed my order to write me a long letter, by return of post.

I get up very early here, and yet somehow I don't get *half* as much into the day as I do at home: away from my own house I never seem able to get into an effective routine and system of work.

I sent you a very little geranium-seed, but though the border is so long, and so broad, and none of the first bloom was cut, there is very little seed: the heads, left on the plants, are very unsightly, but hardly *any* have seed, they are just ugly withered bunches. I looked for more seed just now, and only got about half-a-dozen seeds.

Seeing Fontainebleau made me realise more the selfish extravagance of Louis XIV in building Versailles. He had magnificent palaces in Paris — our kings had nothing in London approaching the Tuileries (which I just remember, but long vanished now), or the Louvre; he had all the glorious châteaux of the Loire — Blois, Chambord, Chenonceau, Azay, Langeais, Amboise: and, if they were too far from Paris for country-houses, he had St. Germain and Fontainebleau. He could not *hope* to equal Fontainebleau, and he did not: but he tried to surpass it, which he could only do in mere size, richness, and *grandiosity*. Of course Versailles *is* more grandiose, much richer, much more ostentatious, than Fontainebleau, but in charm and *ar istic* splendour it does not touch it: and the Versailles park, clever and even imposing as it is, has none of the loveliness of the Fontainebleau forest. To console you, however, for not having seen the forest of Fontainebleau, I may say that, lovely as it is, the *trees* are nothing like so grand as

those in the forest at Savernake: they are crowded too close, and there is too much undergrowth (to encourage the wild-boars, etc.), so that none of the trees are forest-giants like those at Savernake. And Louis XIV knew well, when he spent his millions in making Versailles, that France was starving.

The book of views of Fontainebleau cannot, of course, give you an idea of the exquisite schemes of colour in each room: no palace *can* be *more* beautiful in that respect, for sheer perfection can never be surpassed.

One of the little lavender bags you sent I keep in my letter-drawer, which I just opened, and a quite delicious fragrance came out to remind me of you and home — of which I never need any reminder. To-morrow I go to lunch with Lady Austin-Lee, and shall see no more of her for some time, as she is leaving Paris for a month's holiday in the country: I don't think she often goes to England — which, of course, is not her home. She is a very sincere woman, and I think with her once a real friend it is *always* a friend. . . .

I owe tons of letters — to Lady O'Conor and the Bishop among others: and the latter is always so good; I leave his letters six or seven weeks unanswered, and as soon as I do write to him he answers by return, always with *brimming* affection.

Father Wrafter has sent me another parcel, goodies for the men and more envelopes for me — to him, too, I must write.

I wish I could paint you the sunset effects outside my window — the sunset itself is at the other side of the house. But the upper sky is all slaty-grey, the foreground of the garden dusky green, with only the colour-patches of roses and white hydrangeas showing up, for it is in the house's shadow: but a row of cypress bushes catches a wonderful golden gleam, and behind it a long brown roof has turned carmine; the trees beyond the garden are deep *brown-pink*, and the white houses among

them are salmon-rose, with their roofs a brilliant raw scarlet like new flower-pots: just the lower rim of the sky behind is lilac-rose, flushing into a warmer purple every moment.

It is lighter now than when I began writing an hour ago. But the moment the sun *has* set it will be nearly dark.

I have proclaimed an armistice with the lean cat and made her into a pensioner: instead of fleeing from me she comes now for a *crusty* breakfast, and for a supper of scraps, and the birds are less an object of wistful interest to her. I read somewhere that beasts of prey are always hungry, as they never — with all their hunting — get enough to fill their gaunt sides. It made me feel quite sorry for them.

I must now write some other letters, so I will stop this babble which you must find nearly as silly as Tennyson's brook.

Friday Morning, September 3, 1915

"I HOPE you are quite well as this leaves me at present," my cold having entirely vanished.

Yesterday F. and I lunched with the Austin-Lees, Sir Henry being there, and a Captain Randall, a great aviateur and expert in it. The two latter went off after luncheon to the embassy to do business, and Lady Austin-Lee, F. and I went off to a cinematograph in the Boulevard des Italiéns. The show was *excellent*, and Lady A.-L. enjoyed it tremendously, but I found it too long, as it lasted over two hours. The war films (quite recent ones) were excellent and very wonderful.

Lady A.-L. wanted me to go and have tea with her afterwards, but I wished to go and buy the steel helmet for Bim, that Lady Glenconner asked me to get, so I went off on my own and left her.

It is a very autumnal morning, dark and sombre, and

threatening abundant rain: *quite* cold, so I am feeling well and cheerful.

Just now I burned my finger -- the one one holds a pen with, with the lid of the kettle, and I am trying to write this with the pen held between the third and fourth fingers, and do not find it all easy.

Your Tuesday's letter came just now, in which you tell of your after-tea visit to the garden. If at any time you are tired or sleepy, don't force yourself to write a *letter*, but just write a few words saying, "I am well and will write soon." What matters is for me to know that you are well. It isn't news I care for. And both of us have often some difficulty in finding any.

I must shut up and go to the hospital.

Many thanks for the pretty and lucky white heather.

Friday Night, September 3, 1915

I AM very tired after a long and wearisome afternoon in Paris trying to find the steel "calotte" for Bimbo Tennant, as his mother asked me. I tried innumerable shops ever so far apart, some in the most central and fashionable neighbourhoods, and some far away in extremely *un*-fashionable quarters, to all of which shops I had been recommended: it was only very late in the afternoon that at last I did get the thing; so to-morrow I can send it off to Bimbo, though I feel much doubt as to whether he will wear it. I did nothing else in Paris, so my visit has given me nothing to tell you.

Wilcox has sallied forth to see an old French priest who talks English and is devoted to him; this priest is absolutely blind, and says his Mass by heart. Before our ménage in this Garden House began Wilcox could go and see his friend much oftener. He is too busy now, for Wilcox has to be housemaid, caterer, marketer, cook, and kitchen-maid, and it keeps him pretty well occupied. *I* cook some things, omelettes of ever so many sorts

invented by Mr. Ayscough, sauces for our fish, etc., and puddings when we have any.

Did I tell you that in the cinematograph yesterday there was a series of quite wonderful Indian *shikar* (hunting) scenes? *Too* wonderful; one of them made me feel quite sick. A sort of caravan of native camel-drivers, passing through a jungle, decide to let loose one camel and sacrifice it, to give them time to escape from some tigers. You see the wretched camel loosed and left, and then as it trots to and fro across a glade a huge tiger leaps out and attacks it. The beast makes for the camel's long neck and in a few seconds pulls the huge terrified animal down, and you see all the horrible struggling and kicking till the struggles cease and the camel is dead. It was like a nightmare.

There is none of that quivering and sputtering there used to be in the old cinematograph: it is all quite clear and smooth, with no starts or flickers.

I wonder how Madame M. is enjoying herself at the seaside; her only idea of dissipation is going to church, and I fancy she will find it hard work amusing herself. In some ways she is like Countess S., but less of a lady, and extremely generous, whereas our older friend was mean and stingy. The resemblance chiefly consists in a total absence of tastes, and a flat sort of pietosity. But Madame M. does much for the poor, and works really hard nursing the wounded. Neither lady ever reads or thinks: and Mme. M. doesn't even gossip!

I must be going to bed and, as I have nothing to write about, you do not lose much. Good-night, dear, and may you have none but happy dreams and wake to-morrow to a happy day.

Sunday, September 5, 1915

It is a lovely autumn morning, just the sort I love, bright and cool. If I were not homesick I should say

Versailles was looking lovely: but I am "fed up" with it, as the soldiers say, and can't admire it as it deserves.

Last night, instead of writing to you, I wrote a long letter to the Bishop, as his last to me had been waiting since July — six weeks — for an answer.

This day last year the horrible retreat from Mons ended and we began to move north again. How well I remember it! We were quite near to Paris, though I did not realise then how near, having no map: I have just been looking out the places on a map of the environs of Paris I bought yesterday.

—— turned up yesterday and wanted luncheon: I can't manage luncheon for guests in this house now, so took him off to an hotel: to-day he lunches in Paris with a middle-class comrade, to-morrow he asks me to give him lunch again. I wish he would try to content himself with the luncheon the nuns give him at his convent and not be so restless. But, as he *will* not read, he must be always running about.

We had a smallish batch of wounded in yesterday, about two hundred and seventy, after having none for several weeks. So I must go round and see them.

Your parcel of lavender-bags also arrived this morning, and quite scent the room. Lady Austin-Lee said on Thursday that the one I gave her made the whole drawer in which she put it fragrant.

I have been up since five and am quite sleepy already — it is about ten-thirty.

September 6, 1915

I RECEIVED this morning your letter acknowledging mine telling you of my Fontainebleau visit. . . . Fontainebleau is in every way superior to Versailles, though less pretentious, and one feels all the time how the former had been a home of the French kings for eight hundred years, whereas Versailles was only built to be a pompous death-bed for the monarchy.

Yesterday, having had a late breakfast after Mass, and wanting no luncheon, I hired a victoria and drove again to Malmaison, the Empress Josephine's house and home. It was a lovely afternoon and a lovely drive.

Outside the "barrier" (town-gate) at this end of Versailles, the country, real country, begins at once, whereas outside the barrier on the Paris road there is no country, but houses the whole way to Paris, though it is true they are but a narrow strip with forests behind them.

The first place we passed was a hamlet called Rocquencourt, with a large, very comfortable-looking château, in very large and fine grounds, backed with woods, belonging to Prince Murat; he is a cousin of the Clarys. You know Napoleon I's sister Caroline married his general, Joachim Murat, and Napoleon made them King and Queen of Naples: and the present Prince Murat, who would also be King of Naples had not the Napoleonic power fallen, is very rich, and very thick with the Clarys, who have often talked of him to me.

We also passed a hunting lodge of the Emperor Napoleon III's and a pretty property of the Empress Eugénie's — all carved, so to speak, out of the forest. At Malmaison I discovered that the Empress Josephine and her daughter, Queen Hortense (mother of Napoleon III), wife of Napoleon's brother Louis, King of Holland, were buried in the parish church, called Rueil: and went there. It is a handsome, well-kept church, and I got you cards of the monuments, which are huge (much too big). The drive home was by another road through a forest called St. Cucufa — a very odd name: quite lovely, with a very pretty lake in the middle of it, a small lake that made me think of some of those near Ellesmere.

I was game to go on a long while writing: but —— has just come in asking for luncheon, and I can't write with anyone waiting ostentatiously for me to be finished.

So good-bye. I send two or three odds and ends of

cards too — a very nice Fontainebleau one, and two of Versailles.

Monday Evening, 6.45

YESTERDAY was a very bright, though quite an autumn day, all sun and shine, though driving through the forest there was an unmistakable "bite" in the air, belonging rather to late October than early September — whereas last year at this time, at the front, September was all blazing heat; like a *very* hot August. To-day there has been less sun, after midday, and between five and six quite cold, though a hot thick fog came on.

I am, this evening, a bit in the dumps and am selfish enough to tell you so. I am homesick in *every* way, not *only* for you! but for my home occupations, too. The day here seems to slip away with so little done: and yet I get up very early.

There seems no doubt at all that Germany is beginning seriously to want peace: but the Allies know very well that peace now would really give them *nothing* after all they have spent in suffering and in men, in money, and in sacrifices of every sort. The *New York Tribune* put it very well, saying, "Germany is like a gamester who has been winning all night, and says, 'Now we have played enough; let's stop,' but the others, who have been losing, say, 'Not at all: you must go on.'" The Allies feel that *Time* will be their best friend, and Germany knows it will not be hers. The Allies began to fight short of everything, men, munitions, training, and comprehension of what the war was to be: now they are much stronger, and grow stronger daily: so they can't be expected to want to stop — just at Germany's moment: and especially as they know what impossible demands Germany would make.

Still it *is* a beginning of hope that *one* side should at last be thinking of peace. Obviously, as long as *neither* side thought of it there could be no beginning of hope.

And, after all, I expect that when Germany sees that the Allies are *not* jumping at the first idea of peace, her demands will come down: the more she realises that the Allies *want to go on*, the less anxious to go on will she herself be. . . .

I had a charming letter to-day from Herbert Ward (talking of the cinema in my letter the other day reminded me of him: do you remember he was with us when a man came and gave a short "demonstration" in our dining-room?). He is now in Quetta at the extreme north of India, on a signalling course; a great change from Madras, his station, in the far south. He is a very faithful and devoted friend. . . .

It is lamentable that they should have disfigured that dear little old plain church: it wanted no restoring, and as for yellow-washing the old Saxon font it was brutal.

I am to go and eat. So good night.

September 7, 1915

You will be astonished to see a letter with this date — let me hasten to tell you I have *not* been moved from Versailles, and shall go back there to-morrow night. But I have always wanted to see Chartres, which has about the most interesting cathedral in France, and a famous ancient shrine of Our Lady; so, as to-morrow is the feast of Our Lady's birthday, I determined to come here to-day and say Mass at the shrine to-morrow morning. Chartres is a smallish place, perhaps as big as Winchester, but a very clean, cheerful little country city, beautifully situated, and the cathedral finely placed. It is one of the oldest in France, and, as you will see by the cards I shall send you, extraordinarily beautiful. It is full of almost unique mediæval stained glass, and one of the two spires is a dream of beauty: the other, much less lovely, is far older. The famous shrine of Our Lady is very interesting; in the time of the Druids there was

a black image of a Mother and Child, and those heathens venerated it as the mysterious presentiment of a "Vierge Enfantée," a Virgin who should have a son. When Christianity was first preached here, the pioneers of the new faith did not sniff at the old devotion, but explained it, and said, "The Virgin with the Son is Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the God made man," and the old worship, become articulate and conscious of itself, went on, and has gone on ever since.

The shrine is a wonderful chapel in a quite wonderful crypt under the great cathedral: and is lighted by countless tiny lamps that have a singular and most impressive effect. I got leave to go there alone, when no crowd was there, and said the Rosary in perfect quiet and solitude (I am to say Mass there at six-thirty in the morning) and was allowed to venerate the special relic of the place: *i.e.*, the veil of Our Lady. The whole relic is only exposed on rare occasions, but a little bit has been detached and is enclosed in a Gothic reliquary and that they brought to us, and I was able to examine it closely. It is a little piece of some very ancient linen fabric, woven loosely, with a sort of pattern running through it. It is one of the great relics of the Catholic Church, and it is really a privilege to have been able to see and venerate it under these conditions, apart from any crowd and fuss. The whole crypt is really wonderfully impressive, huge, of immense age, dating back to the introduction of Christianity in almost apostolic times, and unspoilt by any attempts to make it smart and modern: the weird lighting with the countless tiny oil-lamps is exactly what suits it. In one part is a stone well, one hundred feet deep, down which the first martyrs of Christianity in these parts were thrown. I have seen nothing so impressive outside Rome.

I am staying in a very old, quiet, and comfortable hotel, clean and excellent, but quite unpretentious, and not expensive: the whole place is more like an English

cathedral town than any I have seen outside England: only here the cathedral is still Catholic, whereas in England the cathedrals are torn from the worship for which they were built.

This letter won't go by the military post, and I should like to know how long it takes to reach you.

The railway journey was very pretty, through a country like an endless park, with prosperous villages here and there, rich farms and opulent rows of new corn-ricks.

I wrote my last letter in the "dumps;" the change of scene and air has quite cheered me up again. And, as you know, I always like travelling, even short distances; and the mere railway journey is a pleasure and relief to me. I am uncommonly sleepy, and must go to bed.

Wednesday Night, September 8, 1915

This morning I posted to you by the French civil post at Chartres a letter I wrote you there last night: but I do not know whether you will receive it before this one or after. I need only repeat that letter so far as to explain that I have long been anxious to visit Chartres, whose cathedral is one of the most ancient, beautiful, and interesting in France — or indeed in any country: and as to-day is Our Lady's birthday, and the great feast-day there, I went yesterday so as to be able to say Mass in the shrine there to-day.

I have so many different cards of it that I shall send them in at least two batches — perhaps in three: but none are duplicates, and I would like you to keep them all.

I said Mass in the shrine at six-thirty this morning. The chapel is in the crypt, which was crowded with hundreds of pilgrims who all went to Holy Communion. It was wonderfully impressive and devotional, almost like saying Mass in one of the Roman catacombs. After Mass I went to the hotel for breakfast, then went to High Mass sung in the cathedral itself. The Arch-

bishop "assisted" at the throne, and I was in the stalls, and saw the function beautifully. It was fine in itself and the setting glorious. The vast church was crammed with pilgrims, and the music was solemn and good — pure Gregorian: and the ceremonies carried out with perfection: quite one of the scenes that one can never forget.

After luncheon I went to visit two other churches, St. Pierre and St. Aignau: both very fine and very ancient. The stained glass at the cathedral, and at St. Pierre, is splendid, and hard to rival, being of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, very rich, though somewhat sombre in effect, of very dark colouring, and making the church darker than is usual.

After another farewell visit to the cathedral I caught an express train back here: and found my Garden House very homely and comfortable.

I do not think any cards can quite convey the singular loveliness and charm of Chartres Cathedral. Every moment one looked at it, from every point of view, its beauty seemed to become more entrancing, and it stands well, not shut in by mean houses as many Continental cathedrals are. Rouen is not *comparable* to it: Chartres being much earlier, and much purer in style, less florid and less heavy. And the city of Rouen does not attract me a bit; it is big, noisy, crowded, and very dirty, whereas Chartres is brilliantly clean and cheerful, stands high, and though the streets are often very ancient and winding, they are gay, and at the same time quiet; though it has forty thousand inhabitants it is a regular country town, with no manufactures or tall chimneys and no slush or grime. Round the cathedral there seems to reign a smiling calm, that the caw of countless jackdaws upon the towers only makes more peaceful and more gay. The weather was perfect, very brilliant sunshine, and not too hot, though a great deal warmer than it has been for weeks.

It was not at all an expensive trip either, for with military ticket one got there (first class) for four francs, and the hotel, though thoroughly comfortable, was very cheap.

I must go to bed now, and so wishing you none but happy dreams and praying *hard*, hard that we may soon be together again. . . .

Friday Morning, September 10, 1915

I AM beginning what I fear will be a very short and a very empty letter before going across to the convent to say Mass. It is a perfect autumn morning, clear, pale, azure sky, light horizon-haze, bright sun, and tiny, smooth breeze. But it will become hot as the day advances, as yesterday did — our hottest day for weeks.

Yesterday afternoon I went to tea — the first tea I have been to, I think, since leaving England — with a very nice family of Americans; their name is Pringle, and they are, of course, of Scotch descent, but their family has been in America for nearly three hundred years. They themselves were all born in America, but have lived in France nearly all their lives: they have a house at Biarritz and another here, to which latter they have only just come for the autumn. Only one of the four sisters is a Catholic, but they are all ardent admirers of Mr. Ayscough's books. The family consists of four sisters and a brother.

I found them having tea under the trees in their garden, and was instantly surrounded by a yelping crowd of dogs (six), one of which, without a moment's hesitation, bit me in the front of the leg. The ladies seemed to take it as a matter of course, and said:

"How *silly* of you to bite Monsignor, Toto; he is not going to hurt you."

There was a *young* American there, too, from Paris, I think; *very* American, with an accent you could have

wiped your boots on, but evidently a gentleman and nice. He looked rather scowly when the train of dogs flew at him on his arrival.

By this post I send you two ginger-bread pigs, one for you and one for Christie, which I bought in the pilgrimage-fair at Chartres. They were made to order, at least the names were!

In the little box I put the rest of the cards, and a small round box which I bought at that Kermesse at Chaville two or three months ago: I didn't in the least want it, but the enterprising lady *insisted* on my giving her five francs for it. So now I send it on to you, with a little geranium seed in it, and you can use it for what you like.

I find that many people now feel *certain* that the war cannot last beyond the end of this year; that the Germans are running short of money, men, and food, and that soon they will be *forced* to stop fighting. I'm sure I hope so. I began this before Mass and went on with it after my breakfast. During Mass the sun made pretty dancing lights and shadows on the altar, shining through the leaves of the trees outside that the breeze was shaking.

We had a new batch of wounded in yesterday, not *very* many, but nearly three hundred. I must go round to the hospital now.

Sunday Night, September 12, 1915

I WENT to Paris to-day to lunch with the English Passionists at their house in the Avenue Hoche. They are three, Fathers Logan, Hearne and McDarly, all very nice, straighforward, friendly men, and I enjoyed it. After luncheon we sat in the garden and talked, and then I came back here for my little evening service.

Since then I have been reading the *Month* you sent me with this writing-block, and I think I have read it all through. Such a long quiet read was a treat; I seem to have so little time for reading here.

I heard that the Cardinal cannot get nearly all the chaplains he wants for this place (France, I mean). . . . Not that priests are unwilling to come, but because their Bishops won't let them.

Father Keating, the editor of the *Month*, saw the Cardinal a few days ago and tackled him about the continuation of my series of papers in the *Month*, and the Cardinal at once said that I am to go on writing them, and spoke of them in terms of high eulogy: but the indiscreet writings of *some* chaplains, to newspapers, etc., had caused the general prohibition some months ago of *all* writing for the press, which prohibition I have scrupulously obeyed; this prohibition was, of course, demanded by the War Office. You will accordingly see a new instalment of my "French and English" in the October *Month*.

The American family I lunched with yesterday are very good company, and ought to be in a book. They are from Carolina, and aristocratic but not poor, as many of the old Southern gentry are; on the contrary they look in every way all calm prosperity. They have quite a nice garden to their house, and seem to spend most of the day sitting out in it, knitting, embroidering and talking — especially the latter. The small dog who bit me made great friends with me on my second visit and was jealous when any of the other dogs came near.

Monday Evening, September 13, 1915

I HAVEN'T anything particular to tell you, except that I am always thinking of you, and saying countless Masses for you. When you sit looking out of the window if you think of me you may be pretty sure I am thinking of you, too. . . .

Do you remember a very nice young aviator who came over to luncheon once — his name was Mapplebeck, and he had had a bad accident while flying, but

was quite recovered? I am so grieved to see that he has been killed. Poor lad: he was very lovable and attractive.

We are having a spell of heat here, too, but I do not feel it at all. I have been rather uncomfortable lately, owing to inflammation of the periosteum, which means the envelope of the roots of my teeth. I went and saw the dentist and told him flatly I would only have a tooth out if he could undertake it should be a very different operation from the last. This was the elderly dentist, not his partner, who operated before. He examined my teeth and said, "They are excellent: but they are quite extraordinarily firmly rooted in your jaws: only one, the broken one (it is not decayed, but simply broken), is the culprit that sets up the slight inflammation: but I *can't* advise you to have it out: for it is fixed like a rock in your head, and you would suffer horribly. My partner will never forget how you suffered with the corresponding tooth in the other jaw which he extracted. He says it was *far* the worst extraction he ever had to do, and he could not have believed anyone's tooth would be so embedded like a rock in the jaw."

So I have to grin and bear it: and no doubt it will be all right in a day or two. I was quite pleased to find the dentist of my own opinion that it would be useless to risk the real shock of another extraction like the last. And I think, considering that that other tooth *was* so immovably fixed I was lucky that he did not break away some of my jaw with it. The cocaine injection deadened the pain of the *first* extraction, but there were *four*, and the effect had quite gone off before the whole thing was completed, so that the last two . . . were really wrenched out *without* anything to make the shock and pain less. I felt that my heart could not stand much more, and I believe if I had gone on to have another tooth out then I should have collapsed.

I must stop: and so good night.

Saturday Morning, 6.15 A.M., *September* 18, 1915

YOUR letter of Tuesday morning I found at the hospital when I went round there yesterday morning, after closing my own letter to you.

I worked in hospital till luncheon-time, then came home and after luncheon went off to the château to meet the Pringles, F. and young Mr. Dawson (he is quite grown-up, you understand — about thirty-seven or thirty-eight!)

We had a very interesting time going over the château; in addition to all I had seen before — the state apartments, chapel, etc.; we saw the *private* apartments of the kings and queens, the apartments of the princesses (daughters of Louis XV), and the apartment of Madame du Barry: the bathroom of Louis XV and that of Marie Antoinette, etc.

F. got us into trouble! We were in the king's dressing-room, all close together in a group, and I said to the guardians, "I suppose that door is a 'service-door' for the servants to enter by?"

"No, Monseigneur, it is a cupboard," said the man. F., with all of us looking, must needs open the door, and. . . .

"Modern!" explained the guardian, laconically.

The four Americans evidently were choking with laughter, and so were we three men: but we all scuttled off to pretend to admire some carvings or pictures or something!

We also went up onto the roofs, and the views over the surrounding gardens, park, and forests were really glorious.

Then we went to tea with Mr. Dawson at his flat, and a young M. Pleyel came in and played the piano quite magnificently — the finest playing I ever heard except Paderewski's and Slivinski's: but this young fellow is only twenty, and a soldier (not by profession, but by conscription).

I am so glad you like the little brass and silver box that I bought at the Kermesse at Chaville; also the pig — you had better eat him up, or he will get high this close weather.

In a week or two I shall send you some small plants of the fuchsia I told you of — with scarlet *trumpet*-shaped pendant flowers: not large plants, as the gardener tells me it is a very quick grower, and these small plants, about ten inches high, will be quite big and tall next year.

Now I must dress: so good-bye.

Sunday Night, September 19, 1915

Your letter of Thursday reached me to-day, and now I hope to have a quiet talk, though, like yourself, I haven't a great deal to tell you. Yesterday I had to go to Paris to get Bimbo Tennant a steel helmet, painted dove-grey, in addition to the "calotte" or steel skull-cap I had already sent him. It was hot and stuffy; but to-day has been quite different, sunny, clear, and fresh — much more to my taste. A good many leaves have fallen, and the many boulevards of Versailles are strewn with them. Soon the parks will be looking lovely, but to make the trees turn colour some night-frosts will be wanted and so far there have been none.

I had a note to-day from Miss Maria Pringle (the Catholic sister) asking me to tea to-morrow; they really are an acquisition to my very small stock of friends here, their talk is pleasant and cheerful, and they are charming ladies, of an old-fashioned sort not too common now.

I am to lunch with them one day this week, too, to meet a very great friend of theirs of whom I have often heard — the Marquise de Montebello, whose husband used to be a very distinguished ambassador from France to the court of Russia, where Madame de Montebello herself made a great name by her charm and cleverness.

On Tuesday morning I am going to Paris to see the consecration of a Bishop by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris at the Madeleine. The new Bishop — Monseigneur Rivière, is Curé of the Madeleine and is becoming Bishop of Perigueux: it will be a very fine and interesting function; Cardinal Amette will be assisted by the Bishop of Arras (which town is in German hands) and the Archbishop of Sens.

The Pringles are indignant if one pretends to think them *Yankees:* for South Carolina was all against the Northern States, and was friendly to England at the time of the war of American Independence. And they only went to America in the eighteenth century, and scoff at the Pilgrim Fathers!

When I was in India long ago the German Jesuits in Bombay and in that Presidency were extraordinarily kind and hospitable to me, and their work was splendid; they had built half a dozen immense and excellent colleges, and the Government was loud in praise of their work: now they have all been "deported" (one hundred and twenty-four of them), including the Archbishop of Bombay and the Bishop of Poona. They are not accused of any plotting or disloyalty, and it seems rather hard — but the other missionaries, always very jealous of their splendid work, have been badgering the Government to "deport" them. As a matter of fact, being turned out of Germany for being Jesuits, they were the last people to want to abuse the hospitality and toleration of our Empire. As *all* the clergy throughout the whole Bombay presidency are Jesuits and Germans, it is a sad thing for the Catholic population in those parts, as they will be left without clergy, Mass, or sacraments. They had been there sixty years, since 1854, and the condition of things when they arrived was very bad: they were given the job on purpose; the only priests there before being nominally "Portuguese" (really *natives* of Portuguese name, descendants of converts made long

ago by Portuguese missionaries, and called by the family names of their Portuguese godparents), ignorant, and incapable. The Jesuits got everything restored to decency and order, built churches and schools and colleges everywhere, and made their congregations models of behaviour and intelligence: and now the whole body of clergy in the Presidency is "deported" wholesale.

Good night.

Monday Evening, September 20, 1915

To-morrow morning I must get up before five and say Mass before six so as to get into Paris in time for the beginning of the consecration of the Bishop of Perigueux. So I must write to you to-night, as I may not get home in time to write before our rather early post is made up for England.

I have not long come in from the Pringles, who asked me to tea. The family (and the dogs) were in full force, and we sat under the trees in the garden, till it grew a little chilly, when we moved indoors. The dogs had several loudly contested battles among themselves, but as they only bit one another I had no objection.

All morning I worked in the hospital. One poor fellow has his eyes badly burned by the liquid fire the Germans squirt at our fellows now. But I do not think he will permanently lose his sight.

I was shown by Miss Maria Pringle a very interesting little note thrown into one of the French trenches by the Germans, and picked up by a French soldier-friend of hers. It was written in good French and said:

"*Comrades and brave friends!* Why go on fighting against us? We do not hate you; it is the English we hate. We know how brave you are, and how splendidly you fight: but you cannot dislodge us, we are too strongly entrenched and have too many troops behind us. You will only sacrifice your brave lives for nothing. Do make

up your minds to surrender and we promise on our word of honour that you shall be well treated. The English are doing badly in Egypt and in South Africa: they will be beaten soon. You are foolish to be on their side. Why be beaten with them? Come over and trust to us and you will be well treated.

"Your comrades and friends."

I had often heard of these notes, but had never seen one.

The French are not at all likely to be taken in by that sort of stuff: it would take a very different salt to catch them by the tail.

Your letter of Friday arrived this morning: I am so glad it cheered and pleased you to know how constantly I say Mass for you — many times each week — and that my thoughts are almost incessantly with you.

I knew you would be grieved to hear of young Mapplebeck being killed; he was really a nice lad, and I had often hoped to meet him again.

I guessed Miss Burtt would come round to see you: and am delighted that my very minute gift gave her pleasure. *I* thought that little brooch pretty, though less original-looking perhaps than the others.

There does not seem to be much news in the paper to-day, but the letters I get from fellows at the front seem sanguine and cheerful. You mustn't be too much depressed by the *Daily Mail*, whose pessimism is part of its campaign against the existing Ministry. I fancy it wants to get Lloyd George made Premier.

You will say that this is a very dull and prosy letter, and so it is: but hospital work is monotonous and does not give one much to talk about.

I gave some of your lavender-bags to some of the nuns at the convent opposite, where I say Mass five days a week. I only said you had made them, but they hopped to the conclusion that you had made them expressly

for them, and thanked me with such profuse gratitude that I felt quite guilty. They charged me with voluminous messages of gratitude.

I must dry up now: so good night.

Tuesday Evening, September 21, 1915

I said Mass at quarter to six this morning, had breakfast and went in to Paris, getting there at 8.20: and went straight to the Madeleine, where the consecration of Monseigneur Rivière was to take place.

The tickets I had were not numbered, and only gave *admission* to the church, so I had no right to expect any good place, but I showed my card and they gave us *two splendid places* at the very top of the church, close to the sanctuary, where one saw the whole ceremony *perfectly*.

It was quite one of the finest and most glorious functions I ever saw. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Amette, was the consecrant, assisted by the Archbishop of Sens, and the Bishop of Arras, and there were sixteen bishops altogether. The music was *most* beautiful, and the long, very ancient ceremony extraordinarily imposing and fine.

Toward the end a Master of Ceremonies came and begged that when all was over I would allow him to present me to the new Bishop. Poor man, he looked terribly tired, and I should think he had violent neuralgia — *I* should have had if I had been in his place anyway.

After some luncheon I went on one of the Seine steamers down the river to the Jardin des Plantes, and renewed my acquaintance with the wild beasts, some of whose portraits I send you!

We went to the lions' quarters at three o'clock to see them fed, but the lions' butcher telephoned that he had not been able to get their dinner in time, and could not send it round till five o'clock. If I was disappointed,

imagine the disappointment of the lions! They looked so terribly *empty*, and each of them fidgeted round and round his or her den in uncontrollable hunger and impatience. They are only fed once in the twenty-four hours and the piece of horse-flesh they get is not big, so I'm sure the poor creatures were enduring pangs of hunger. When I speak of the "lions," that includes all the large wild-beasts in that house — wolves, panthers, pumas, hyenas, etc. There are lots of jackals, very pretty little foxy beasts, and uncommonly glad to get hunks of buns, etc.: so were the huge bears — brown, black and polar. But no amount of hunger would make the lions eat sweet cakes! They looked much as Napoleon would have looked had you offered him an acid-drop. One large snake had just been changing his skin, and the old one was lying in his tank, but he seemed quite done up by the ceremony — like the Bishop of Perigueux.

There were plenty of crocodiles, but no large ones; four or five *huge* turtles; a lot of chameleons, that really did absolutely copy the colours of what they were sitting on — those on a tree-stump were just the shade of its bark, while those on the yellow sanded floor were exactly of that shade.

No English mail came in to-day, so I suppose there will be two to-morrow.

I am very sleepy after getting up at twenty past four this morning and all my runnings about to-day: so I will go to bed.

I hope you are well, and that this honest autumn weather is suiting you — to-day, by the way, was uncommonly hot in Paris, much hotter than any day of August; still not stuffy or heavy. On the Seine there was a fresh and sweet breeze.

Good night.

Thursday Evening, 5.45 P.M., *September* 23, 1915

It is a heavy, disagreeable evening — what I call "gashly": the sun disappeared about three o'clock, and it became thick and cloudy, but hotter than ever, with not a breath of live air anywhere. Now a few hot drops of rain are falling, but I fear it is not going to be much.

I used to tell you that this grey, hot weather at Versailles was like a Malta sirocco, but the difference is that whereas the sirocco was teeming with damp it is not so here, but very dry, and I suppose that is why one does not feel it much. Still it is very oppressive, and always depresses my spirits for the moment: as you know the dark weather that comes from rain never depresses me in the least — that seems to me natural and above-board.

Hurray! The rain is really coming down, and I hope it will go on all night and give us a clean, washed day to-morrow. Though it has not yet struck six, it is so dark in my window that I have to move my writing-table back to its place and light up for the evening.

I had a very nice letter from Lady Austin-Lee to-day, rather reproaching me for not having written, so I must do so: and Countess d'Osmoy also writes, mildly reproaching me for my silence. I must write to both this evening, also to Lady O'Conor and the Duchess of Wellington.

The story of the German governess at Woolwich is very interesting and instructive; no doubt the Germans have had plenty of such spies for years past: and no doubt everyone thought *their* particular Fräulein was immaculate.

I wonder where the Beraneks are, and if they are still in the land of the living.

Queen Eugenie of Spain must be having a very uncomfortable time of it; Spain is furiously pro-German, and her mother-in-law, the Queen Dowager, is, of course, Austrian. Is the Austrian Emperor's portrait that he

sent me still displayed on the inlaid table in the drawing-room? I forgot all about it: but I think it would be well to wrap it up in silver paper and put it safely away till after the war.

I must now stop to tackle those other letters.

I bought you a pretty ring for a birthday-present to-day, and thought to send you, besides, a little tip. Does that suit your ideas?

With best love to Christie.

Saturday Evening, September 25, 1915

When I was writing to you a night or two ago I spoke of the very close, hot, sunless weather we had had, and how a few drops of rain began to fall. Since then the weather has quite broken, and yesterday and to-day have been very rainy, though it has not rained all day to-day, nor did it do so yesterday.

However, at two o'clock this afternoon, the hour at which we were to start in the Pringles' motor for Rambouillet, it came down in torrents, and seemed determined to go on indefinitely. So we (F. and I) were not surprised that the motor and the ladies did not turn up. After a while one of their footmen brought a note asking if we could go to-morrow, Sunday: and so we walked round and found the four ladies all at knitting or embroidery or stitching, and rather glad to have two people to talk to. The five dogs all leaped to their feet, and barked and snarled, but we were neither of us bitten, and presently they all dashed out into the garden to bite the gardener at their leisure. When they returned they were quite quiet for a while, but presently Koko became jealous of Cricket, who was seated on Miss Susie's lap, and made a leap at him and bit him, which Cricket returned with interest. Miss Susie tried to impose peace, and I saw Koko (my friend) give her two pretty successful bites. She did not seem to be either surprised

or annoyed, and Koko's mistress, Miss Maria, said, "Susie, your dress must have some very nasty dye in it, for poor Koko is spluttering and making faces as he always does when he has got something disagreeable in his mouth."

Apart from these little interludes our visit was very pleasant and peaceful: I gave them (not the dogs) a lavender-sachet each, and they were delighted: and also I gave them a copy of "Mezzogiorno." To-day I sent Lady Austin-Lee a copy of "Faustula," and will give her "Gracechurch" as well. The Pringles showed me an interesting picture of the "Pringle House" at Charleston, in which their old aunt lives alone. It was built in George II's time *out of bricks brought from England*, and is a fine, solid, Georgian house, with a fine stone portico: handsome, grave, respectable, and aristocratic-looking.

In spite of the dogs I never met so nice an American family, and they give one a very pleasant impression of heartiness and sincerity. They are just the sort of people *you* would like (I can't undertake to say you would like the dogs!) and they like the sort of things I like — reading aloud some book worth reading, in a homely sort of way, while the rest work.

Dearest, have courage and trust, and God will bring us to each other again.

Sunday Evening, September 26, 1915

If this is a short letter it is not because I am pressed for time, but because my very long letter of last night used up pretty nearly all I had to say.

Our hospital is for the moment nearly empty, as we sent every man who could possibly be moved away to-day, having received an order to be ready to receive a very large number of wounded. This means that we are making a big "push" up on the front: and oddly enough

I heard first that it was to be from *Scotland! i.e.*, in a letter from Lady Glenconner two days ago. Bim had told her that a big advance was to be made, involving a million men.

I said Mass this morning asking God to be with our hosts, and especially that we and our French comrades might succeed in taking vast numbers of prisoners who should surrender unhurt.

God knows I have never prayed bloodthirsty prayers: still one can see now that it would have been a *merciful thing* if in the beginning of the war we could have, with our Allies, inflicted a crushing blow on the enemy even if it had involved great loss of life: for then the war would have not dragged on with its daily and weekly losses of life for thirteen months.

It looks as if things were about to emerge from the deadlock of the last month or two: Bulgaria's mobilisation has made Greece mobilise, and will probably make Roumania do the same, and at least there will be *action:* nothing tends to prolong the war like the sitting tight of recent weeks.

I must write other letters *now:* so good-bye.

Monday Evening, September 27, 1915

We had a good large convoy of wounded during last night, and I was busy in hospital all morning. Everyone seemed in good spirits, the French and English advance had been so successful and encouraging — the most successful thing on our front since the Battle of the Marne nearly a year ago. If this activity continues and is blest with similar success, it will do something toward ending the war.

There is an air of cheerfulness and satisfaction on all faces. I went to luncheon with our Americans, but the Marquise de Montebello, who was to have come from Paris (on purpose to meet *me*), had to telegraph that she

could not come, as she is in charge of a hospital, and wounded soldiers were pouring in. Five thousand French wounded arrived, in Paris only, from the front yesterday. Our hostesses and host were very nice and pleasant and our luncheon party was very agreeable.

Afterwards two of the sisters motored us in to Paris for the drive, in their huge and most luxurious motor. We went by the forest and park of St. Cloud and came back by Neuilly and the Seine. I enjoyed it immensely; as you say, these kind and really very agreeable ladies are a great acquisition. They have a great friend at Biarritz (where they consider their *home* is, as the house there is their own, and they spend eight out of the twelve months there every year), the Duchess of San Carlos, an American married to a Spanish grandee, who, they say, is wildly jealous of their knowing me, as she is a fervent admirer of John Ayscough's books. . . .

Yes, I am sorry for the German Jesuits of the Bombay Presidency; but, as you say, *English* Jesuits in Germany would no doubt have had much worse to suffer. And if it leads to the appointment of English priests for the whole Bombay Presidency, it will do great good. And it appears that there have always been many English who disliked and resented having these German priests to hear their confessions, preach to them, etc., and after the war a more satisfactory arrangement may be arrived at. It certainly seems odd that in a whole Presidency of a British possession the priests should be foreigners.

Tuesday, 7.45 A.M.

I am just going to say Mass for you.

Tuesday Evening, September 28, 1915

It is a chilly, tempestuous evening, and I like it! The morning was fine, so was the early afternoon, and

I was pleased to think that the Pringle party going to Brittany were having such a nice day for their start: for Mr. Pringle, Miss Maysie and Miss Susie, with the chauffeur, were going in the big new car to Brittany till Saturday — it is very powerful and quick, and can do one hundred kilometres an hour. They were to do four hundred miles to-day!

I was to go to tea with Miss Cassie and Miss Maria, and did so, but when I arrived the whole family was there. They only got as far as Rambouillet, fifty kilometres from here, when the car broke down hopelessly. However, it was decent enough to do so close to the railway station, and they came back to Versailles by train. So their trip is all off. They did not seem to mind much, and took it very cheerfully.

There were two Irish ladies there, a Miss S. and a Miss B., the latter a tall, rather severe-looking person in black, who eats nothing but raw meat! She is supposed to be able to assimilate no other nourishment.

And that is all there is to tell you.

Wilcox, to cure his stammer, used to read aloud to his friend Father McGrain in India, and I let him read aloud to me for half an hour every evening. He reads wonderfully well, and read some of "Gracechurch" to me to-night. The only mistake he made was to pronounce the name of Dives to rhyme with *lives*.

Your letter of Saturday arrived to-day. I'm glad you liked the *beast* cards. I also thought the panther more like a leopard: but all his names and titles are painted up over his den, and he *is* some sort of panther. He is not very large, and is very agile and playful, with graceful, rapid movements: but when he sits still and looks out at you he has a sulky, ill-conditioned face.

I saw that Stonehenge had been sold to that man, and for a very poor price. I expect Lady Antrobus will be savage; but I have heard nothing of her for ages. I used to meet Sir Cosmo at Amesbury Abbey; he is not

at all like his brother, being tall and slim. . . . I wonder *she* does not buy West Amesbury House (that big picturesque house as you go from Amesbury to Wilsford); she always had a great liking for it. . . .

If my very small birthday present arrives *before* the third, please keep it till that morning and don't open it till then — on your honour now!

I think the Pringles do know the Austin-Lees already, but not very intimately. I heard from Lady A.-L. to-day. Sir Henry is with her, and they return to Paris altogether next week.

I must dry up now, and think of dinner, or supper. It is rather an unconventional meal, *never* soup, sometimes fish, sometimes mutton chops, sometimes cold ham: never pudding, and almost always fruit.

Give my best love to Christie and remember me duly to the Gaters.

September 29, 1915

It is only the 29th, but as this will not go till to-morrow I think I had better be getting my birthday letter ready. Beside the ring I only send you a pair of gloves, and in a few days will send you a small tip. . . .

I had to go to Paris to-day, and bought the gloves there: they are $6\frac{3}{4}$, because in the shop they said our English sizes are slightly larger than theirs, so that $6\frac{3}{4}$ in French sizes is equal to $6\frac{1}{2}$ in English.

It was a cold, drizzly day in Paris, and I stayed no longer than I could help, and when I got home I was delighted to find that Wilcox had made a good fire in my room: the first I have had. For in the kitchen we do all our cooking on gas stoves, which are very clean and convenient.

I always have revelled in the first fire of autumn, and this one made my room look uncommonly cheerful and homely.

September 30

It is a very bright, but quite cold autumn morning, and much more like very late October than the last day of September. I have just received your letter of Monday, and I suppose Alice is with you now, as she was to arrive last night. I do hope she will be with you for your birthday, and I think she will, as you said she was to come for a week.

One of the nuns of the convent where I say Mass every day gave me a book written by one of their English sisters, and I send it on to you as part of your birthday present. I do trust you will have a happy birthday: I shall say Mass for you at eight o'clock, and in the evening at 8.30 will drink your health in a bottle of fizzy wine that must be bought for the purpose: there is no hope of my being with you *this* year for your birthday; but things are going so well for us now that there really does begin to be hope of my being with you before we are any of us much older.

Almost all my Masses now are said for (1) you, (2) the blessing of God upon our arms and those of our Allies.

I have a very large number of wounded to attend to, and must go round to hospital to do it.

So good-bye; and wishing you *every* possible happiness and blessing on your birthday, and during your eighty-seventh year.

Best love to Christie and Alice.

Thursday Night, September 30, 1915

I posted my meagre birthday presents, a little ring, a pair of gloves, and a book, to you to-day: with a rather dull letter. As I think it very likely they will arrive too soon, I wish you a very, very happy birthday and all comfort and happiness possible till we are together again, and after. Alice was to arrive last evening, and as I think

you said she was coming for a week, she will be with you on your birthday, of which I am *very* glad. She will cheer you two old parties up, and have plenty to tell you.

Our hospital is now crowded and so I am busier than usual, but of eight hundred wounded who came in last (on Tuesday night) there was not *one* stretcher case — they were all able to *walk* in.

The paper to-day says that the German losses, on this western front, are 120,000 in killed, wounded and prisoners. If we keep on hammering at that rate the war really will come to an end some day, and Germany will have to plead for peace.

Talking of figures, you made me laugh by saying that Mr. Chubb or Jubb or Drubb only gave 6,000,600 pounds for Stonehenge — *only*, *i.e.*, six million six hundred pounds! Not so bad, either. I have a fire again to-night, and am revelling in it: it has been a *glorious* autumn day, bright sun, but cold and bracing — fancy Versailles bracing!

We have had no frost, but the cold rains have finished the really splendid long border here: for months it has been a blaze of colour (like my face).

Friday Morning

No English mail in yet, so no letter from you to acknowledge; but no doubt the post will come in later on in the day.

Yesterday someone sent me two bottles of old whisky, which arrived smashed to atoms, and everyone else's letter smelling vehemently of whisky.

I must now go off to the hospital.

Friday Night, October 1, 1915

During the last few days, since the big advance of our troops, our mails for some reason have been coming in very irregularly, and to-day's has not yet arrived: but no doubt it will crop up to-morrow morning.

I have really nothing to tell you, as during the last day or two I have been too busy in hospital to go and see anybody or do anything.

The worst of this exclusively hospital work, and work in a hospital like ours, is that you hardly ever get to know any of the men well, as they are seldom kept here many days. As soon as they can possibly be moved they are packed off to Rouen or England, that we may have their beds free for more lately-wounded men.

In the street to-day I met Mlle. de Missiessy, who told me her mother has been ill for three weeks with sciatica, and is to-day rather sad because her elder son has to join his regiment at Souchez to-morrow, the place where the fighting is so fierce. She begged me to go and see Comtesse de Missiessy to cheer her up.

Saturday Morning

THE same post brings me *another* parcel from Father Wrafter, a very nice letter from Lady O'Conor, a *very* cordial and affectionate letter from the Bishop, and a lot of others.

Our bright, cold, and invigorating autumn weather continues and I feel very fit in consequence: for the moment I have no cold — at Versailles I am generally armed with one — and my "periosteum" has given over annoying me.

Sunday, October 3, 1915

MANY Happy Returns of the Day! I said Mass for you at seven thirty this morning and begged Our Lord to give you a happy, cheerful day, and to grant you all your prayers. It is a lovely October morning, very bright, with a disappearing frost, no wind, but a keen brisk air.

The only letter I got to-day — a very rare occurrence — was yours of Thursday: a very cheery one, reflecting your pleasure at Alice's coming.

I am so glad you mutually thought each other looking well.

Now, my dear, I'm going for a little stroll in the parks, the first for weeks and weeks.

So with best love to Christie and Alice — and ten thousand wishes that you may be having a happy birthday.

Your Birthday, at night

In a few minutes I shall go down to dinner to drink your health in a specially purchased bottle of wine, the only cheap thing in France just now; any reasonably cheap eggs explode in your face, and any cheap butter is appalling.

This morning before luncheon I went, as I told you I was going to, for a little walk in the park, and went to the Little Trianon, almost wholly empty at that hour. The day was lovely, so was the place, and I enjoyed my solitary stroll very much. Last year I remember going for another lonely stroll on your birthday — up at the front then, and I nearly strolled into the German lines! It was just such a day as to-day, bright and fresh, with the smell of autumn in the brisk air.

The Trianon glades were incomparably lovelier to-day than last time I was there: the blackish-green monotone of summer changed into many varied shades of yellow, citron-green, and russet: and the ground patched with deep, rustling litter of fallen leaves. I picked a few geranium seeds from the long borders in front of the little palace, and though they are nothing wonderful, they will interest us hereafter as having come from Marie Antoinette's garden.

On coming home I found a note from the Pringles asking what had happened to me, as I had not been near them since Tuesday, and begging me to go round this afternoon, which accordingly I did. They were all very cordial and friendly and glad to see me: and, as their

big motor has been put right, our trip to Rambouillet is to come off to-morrow afternoon, if it is a day like to-day and yesterday. We go by the village and castle of Montfort, whence Simon de Montfort came.

After tea I went to the hospital for my little evening service: and then instructed a convert; and finally came home and am writing this.

Monday Night, October 4, 1915

I HAVE a little more than usual to make you a letter of, because to-day our trip to Rambouillet really came off, and most delightful it was. The motor came to the gate at two o'clock, and inside were Miss Maria, Miss Maysie, and Miss Susie — the eldest sister, Miss Cassie, and the brother, Duncan, stayed at home.

The whole drive of about twenty-five miles each way was through a perfectly lovely country — we went one way and came back another, but both ways were equally beautiful. It is nearly all forest, but not flat forest, deep forest valleys, and wooded hills.

We went by Port Royal, and got out of the motor to visit the site (there are scarcely any ruins) of the famous Abbey of Port Royal: I doubt if you know much about it, but perhaps you may. In the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth the nuns of Port Royal were very famous, chiefly for their austerity and fervour, but they fell into bad odour with Rome and the rulers of the Church on account of a suspicion of heresy that attached to them — the Jansenist heresy, which showed itself in a hard and narrow rigorism, and, like all heretics, they were uncommonly obstinate. The convent, or Abbaye, was still going strong at the Revolution, during which it was completely destroyed: so completely that little remains save the Colombière, a great dovecot, of which I enclose a card, and another of the remains of the kitchens, etc.

The situation is lovely, sloping meadows, shut in by wooded ridges of hills, and views of rich water-meadows in the valley-bottom.

After getting back into the motor we went through Dampierre, a village belonging to the Duc de Luynes, with his big château nestled down in it. He is quite young, and I meet him occasionally.

At Rambouillet we went over the château, which is, of course, no Versailles, or Fontainebleau, but is fascinating. A *very* ancient château — a fortified manor, not a castle — was replaced by another château in the fourteenth century: of the older château there remains the massive, squat tower, and in that tower Francis I died on March 31, 1547.

In 1706 Rambouillet became the property of the Comte de Toulouse, son of Louis XIV by Madame de Montespan, and he had all the rooms lined with exquisitely carved panelling, as you can see in the pictures I send. Louis XV often stayed there, and hunted in the forest. Louis XVI bought the place and it became a royal residence — a sort of shooting lodge. Napoleon I also used to stay there, and his bathroom is now a small study: he had it all painted in Pompeian style by Vasserot.

Louis XVIII and his brother Charles X often stayed there and on August 2, 1830, Charles X signed his abdication in the dining-room.

Napoleon I, after Waterloo, came there, and slept there for the last time on June 29, 1815 — eleven days after Waterloo, setting forth next day on his journey to Brest to deliver himself to the English. At present the château is the country-house of the President of the Republic. The cards I send will give you an idea of the place both outside and in. We had tea in the little town, and motored back to Chevreuse. . . .

Your letter of Friday, October 1st, arrived to-day, and I can see from it how you are enjoying Alice's visit.

Saturday, 10 A.M., *October* 9, 1915

YOUR very cheery welcome letter of Wednesday has just arrived, and *gave me great satisfaction* because it showed you were in good health, spirits, and courage when you wrote. I'm glad you asked the Geddeses to tea, and found them pleasant people. . . .

It is another excellent autumn morning, far from warm, but cheerful and sunny. I have been saying Mass for the soul of the eldest son of my fish-wife. When I went to buy my fish yesterday I found the poor woman weeping bitterly over her mackerel and sprats — and guessed only too well what had happened, for I knew she had three sons at the front. The eldest had just been killed at Souchez (where Comtesse de Missiessy's son is). I could only say that I would say Mass for him to-day: and she, and two of his sisters, came to hear it.

I went to see Comtesse de Missiessy yesterday, but found her future son-in-law's motor at the door, and he just waiting to take her off to Paris for a few days' change, so I did not go in.

I'm in dread about Bim Tennant, not having had any reply to my last letter (which required an answer), and knowing that the whole brigade of Guards had it very hot the other day: the Colonel and Second-in-Command of the Coldstreams both killed. I should feel it *very* much if anything happened to dear Bim; he is more fond of me than any of them are, and he is a very, very nice lad.

We have had some sharp work on our *Indian frontier*, up north; Mahometan tribes (usually the most loyal) up against us, and we have had heavy losses, fourteen thousand in one place. No doubt the German agents have been busy spreading tales of our being beaten in this war, and so lowering our prestige. Unfortunately, Herbert Ward, our young friend, is up there, and I fear his mother will be terribly anxious if *she knows:* but it is

not everyone who does know of this fighting on the Indian frontier.

I am going to tea to-day with my Pringles and always like going there.

Please thank Winifred for her very great kindness and thoughtfulness in writing me enclosed: *nothing* could have given me more real pleasure than what she says about you.

Saturday Night

As I wrote to you this morning and as nothing has happened since, not even a shower of rain, I shan't have much to say: but I want to write to-night because to-morrow I shall be busy in the hospital.

I went to tea with my Pringles who were all very jolly; the tribe of dogs met me at the door and were extremely urbane, only jealous of one another, each wanting to be petted. After tea, in the drawing-room, something excited them, and my old friend Koko bit me in the thigh without the slightest prejudice: it did not hurt, and did not draw blood, but of course I felt it; he always bites whomsoever is nearest, so no personal compliment was intended.

On Monday I am lunching there and we are to motor to St. Germain.

Our diplomacy in Greece and the Balkan Courts seems to have been rather innocent and ineffective. Anyway I trust King Ferdinand may meet with the due reward of his Judas policy, and that the Greeks may not fall into the folly of making friends with the friends of Turkey. If the Germans detach too many men for the Balkan adventure they may find themselves pushed pretty hard on the Western front and the Russian, too.

Monday, 10.30 A.M., *October* 11, 1915

YESTERDAY I had your very cheery and comfortable letter of Thursday, and also two copies of *St. Joseph's Lilies*. Certainly the "appreciation" *ought* to satisfy you, if unbridled eulogy of J. A. is what you want! I liked all the literary part very well, but the personal part at the beginning, about my heroic services out here (at *Versailles!!!*) made me feel rather silly. However, I *was* at the front once!

After luncheon I went for quite a long walk in the parks, at the *back* of them, where there are no formal walks or statues, or fountains, but natural woods and glades.

It was quite lovely in those woods, and I did so much wish you could be there. The lights among the trees and glades were exquisite, and the carpet of fallen leaves made a comfortable rustle as one walked. . . .

Monday Evening, October 11, 1915

THIS morning I lunched with the Pringles, and afterwards we all motored to St. Germain, and thence on to Poissy, of which place I enclose half a dozen cards. The church is very fine, and in it is the old font in which St. Louis (King Louis IX) was baptised. I do not remember the exact date, but I should say it was seven and a half centuries ago. We walked down to the bridge, of which you have a card here enclosed, very fine, and with exquisite views of the river. It was a mild, misty afternoon, but the mist did not hide the woods, and only made them more beautiful. We walked back to the church, where we had left the car, and drove home by St. Germain again, where we again got out to walk on the famous terrace, of which I sent you a card at the time of my former visit to St. Germain. The view from it across the Seine valley is quite superb, and the terrace

is over a mile and a half long: there our poor exiled James II used to walk and think of England — as I do!

At one end of it is the *vieux* château of St. Germain (not the *great* château of which you have cards) where Louis XIV was born.

When we got back to Versailles we all went to a restaurant, where I treated our party to tea and toast — quite English toast.

To-morrow there is to be an interesting concert in the château here, in the Galerie de Batailles, and of course the Pringles have taken a ticket for me, too: and I am to go to tea with them on Thursday. They are really the most hospitable and kind creatures, and they are an immense acquisition.

I only got your letter of Friday when I got in here; You must not want to exterminate *all* the Bulgarians! but you may exterminate their hateful king as soon as you like. He is a German, and a very bad one, base, treacherous, totally without heart or conscience, and eaten up with ambition. I am sure he imagines that Germany and Austria will make him Balkan Emperor.

He is, of course, a cousin of our King, though not a very near one — and you will remember another cousin of his, Prince Leopold, who came to see us at Plymouth. His mother, Princess Clementine, was a daughter of Louis Philippe, and as great a schemer as her father.

I must write other letters.

Tuesday Night: no, Wednesday Morning;
It is past twelve and A.M.

I DULY received to-day your letter of Sunday.

Yesterday I went with the Pringles to a very interesting concert given (1) to entertain wounded soldiers; (2) and also to raise money for the Versailles war hospitals: so, of course, the wounded men did not pay, but everyone else did.

It was the same *sort* of thing as the entertainment at the Trocadero, which I described to you long ago, but on a much smaller scale. Still the "encadrement" was *more* interesting, for yesterday's concert was given in the vast Galerie de Batailles of the château here, a splendid and truly regal hall lined with colossal pictures of French victories. I enclose a copy of the programme, as it is a sort of little memento.

The concert lasted from two till five thirty! Then I took the Pringles to tea at a nice little tea-shop we have discovered: then I came in and began the instalment of "French and English" for the November *Month*.

To-day, Wednesday, I have, after luncheon, to attend the funeral (not to conduct it) of the officer commanding the Kings' Own Scottish Borderers, Colonel Verner, who died in our hospital from his wounds, on Sunday night; I remember him at Plymouth as a subaltern.

Thursday, 9.45 A.M., *October* 14, 1915

WILCOX has just gone round to hospital for the letters, so I do not know yet whether there is one from you for me, or no: there almost always is. Yesterday, immediately after luncheon, I had, as I told you, to attend the funeral of Colonel Verner, who commanded the King's Own Scottish Borderers, and died on Sunday night from his wounds. The funeral started from the hospital and was a fine and touching sight. The French sent a double squadron of dragoons, besides many officers; there were all our officers who could possibly be spared from duty at the hospital, and about seventy men. The French uniforms were splendid, and made a fine contrast with our sober khaki.

We marched very slowly, all through the town to the Gonard Cemetery, Mrs. Verner walking all the way just behind the hearse. Her son (wounded) walked at her side, also her mother and sister-in-law. These chief

mourners had a sort of guard of honour of French dragoons. At the grave the poor widow stood by her lad's side, and slipped her hand in his: they were both of them very simple and quiet. Only as the coffin was lowered did I see her lift her eyes as if trying to force back her tears, and a sort of spasm held her very pale face.

There were numbers of French, both at the graveyard and along the route to it, and I think the wonderful sympathy and respect shown comforted the poor woman.

This morning when I got up at quarter to six there was a thick fog, but it has gone, and I should not wonder if we had a sunny day. The Pringles have a Beast Party to-day, to polish off all the callers whom they don't much mind missing. They apologised for asking me to come and help, and seemed quite grateful when I said, "Of course." So handing tea-cups will be my afternoon's occupation and F.'s too. His little friend, the Duchess of Trévise, was next me at the concert on Tuesday, but we only beamed at each other, as French people do *not* chatter and whisper throughout a concert.

A Frenchwoman came to me and told me that a certain soldier at our hospital was very eager to marry her. I saw him and said nonchalantly (quite as if I *knew*), "But you *are* married. . . ." He at once admitted it, and swore he had never meant to deceive Mademoiselle G., that he merely wished for the pleasure of walking out with her, etc. So that little plot is cracked.

I shall presently be sending back the two Thackeray books you sent and with them some packets of letters. So don't be disappointed, thinking it is a nice present!

I must dry up.

Friday, 6 A.M., *October* 15, 1915

I WOKE about three o'clock with horrible neuralgia; and, as it got worse every quarter of an hour, I determined

at four o'clock to try a cure — the opposite of a "rest cure" — and got up, dressed, went down to the kitchen and worked! — washed up crockery, cleaned some saucepans, cut up and cleaned vegetables for soup, put the soup on to simmer, etc.!!! and it was a complete success: the neuralgia is almost gone, and now I am sitting down to complete the cure by writing to you.

It is just light, though not light enough to write without a lamp, and there is a dense white fog, as there was yesterday at dawn; but yesterday it ended in a very sunny day, and I expect it will be the same to-day.

Yesterday afternoon I went to tea with the Pringles, who had a regular tea-party; of course it was much less pleasant than when they were by themselves; the guests blocked themselves up in corners, and would not budge, and there was no general talk or moving about. Miss Maria said to me, "I wish one might shake them." I said, "I know all about tea-parties, and your mistake was in giving them chairs: my mother always used to try and make me do the same thing, but once you let chairs into an At Home tea-party you're done for: the people glue themselves to them and will neither move about nor talk to anyone but the accomplice on the chair adjacent."

I got your dear letter of Monday yesterday; you seem to get mine much quicker than I get yours, at least it is so sometimes, for the one I wrote on last Thursday morning, as I was starting for Paris with Wilcox, you got on Saturday afternoon.

This letter of yours encloses Mr. Gater's note thanking you for the wine: I am very glad you sent him that gift, for he seems very much to appreciate it, and its being a naval prize makes it interesting.

Now I must do my real dressing and shaving; my four o'clock in the morning toilette was "provisional," like a revolutionary government.

Saturday, 11 A.M., *October* 16, 1915

I FEEL quite in the mood for writing a long letter, but it is eleven o'clock and I must go round to hospital, so my letter must be put off till to-night.

Saturday Evening, October 16, 1915

THIS morning I had no time to do more than write to say I had no time to write! So now I will try and make up. I went off to the hospital and saw a lot of new arrivals and then came home to luncheon, after which I met F. at the gate of the Grand Trianon in the park, where the Misses Pringle (or rather three of them, for Miss Maysie has a cold and "kept house") were to meet us and go for a long walk. However, only Miss Maria (and three dogs) turned up, as Mr. Pringle had made two of them go out with him in the car. So we went for a *little* walk, in the Little Trianon, which was looking perfectly exquisite. The trees have turned the most lovely colour, and their pictures in the lakes, and in the little artificial river, were almost more perfect than themselves: and there was a tender, opal-like "atmosphere," not in the least a mist, but just an effect of bluish pink between the more distant belts of trees and the eye.

You would have longed to paint dozens of pictures of it all, and there are inexhaustible pictures there. After our walk we returned to the Pringle House and had tea; the motorists had not returned, but we found Miss Maysie in the drawing-room. Almost everyone here seems armed with a cold just now, including poor Mr. Ayscough, whose snufflings make me very uncomfortable. I am sure it is the relaxing air of Versailles that makes one so apt to catch cold, but if one hints to any native that it *is* relaxing, he almost swallows one, cold and all.

Lady Austin-Lee was out when F. and I called there

yesterday, but this morning I had a note from her begging me to go to luncheon to-morrow: that, unfortunately, I cannot do, as I am engaged to lunch with the chaplain of the convent where F. is in hospital.

Yesterday he and I went into Paris, where I had to buy two more helmets at Lady Glenconner's request, one for a son of her sister, Lady Wemyss — who was Lady Elcho when you met her long ago: since then her very old father-in-law has died, and her husband has become Lord Wemyss: the other helmet is for another brother-officer of Bim's, Osbert Sitwell.

Also I wanted to buy the stockings, muff and "stole" for you.

I did buy all these things, and to-day sent off your things which I hope will arrive in due course. I hope you will think the fur — a soft grey — pretty, and it feels soft and comfortable: of course it is not one of the costly furs, for, though you deserve the best, I could not afford them. The stole is large and broad, and should keep you warm. I think the soft slaty grey of this fur will suit you better than black or the yellowish sorts of furs.

After our shopping we called on Lady Austin-Lee, and, she being out, we went then to the Faubourg St. Honoré, to call on Comtesse de Sercey, a great friend of Lady O'Conor, whom I have been promising to call upon ever since I arrived here. She was out, but her sister, Mlle. d'Angleau, was in, and we stayed about half an hour. She is a clever, amiable person, with almost overwhelming conversational powers.

And that, I think, is all I have to tell you of my doings.

Your letter of Wednesday came this morning in which, oddly enough, you mention Harold Skyrme's being in the "Warspite" and by the same post came a letter from him. He had had a few days' leave which he spent in the bosom of his family, the whole bosom assembling at Cardiff for the purpose.

All letters from neutral countries like Holland would be sure to be opened by the censor; *my* letters to you never are.

—— is *quite* civil to me these days. He must be feeling out of sorts. You must understand that *his* politeness is like anybody else's rudeness. I must stop now to write to Father Wrafter: he has got his wish at last and is coming out to the front as a chaplain, and his last act is to send me a beautiful warm new rug and a big piece of Irish bacon!

Monday, 12 noon, October 18, 1915

I CAN only write very hurriedly: last night when I got in from church I had a ruck of little things to do, one after another, till it was bed-time; and this morning, since Mass, I have been really very busy.

It is St. Luke's Day, and is a regular St. Luke's summer-day, very sunny, rather still, and rather cold. Just as I was vesting for Mass this morning I heard that my late landlord here, Beranek, is dead: so I offered the Mass for him. He was in a very precarious state before his arrest, spitting blood, and so on; and all the worry of his imprisonment no doubt told against him. I believe he has been ill almost ever since his arrest: and his death hardly surprises me.

Yesterday I was very busy: but had to lunch at F.'s convent, a party of five — myself, F., the chaplain of the convent, a Canon of Versailles, and the Duke of Trévise, grandson of Napoleon's Marshal Mortier. The luncheon was rather stodgy and overpowering; but everybody was very nice and cordial: only my cold was at its snuffly-est stage and I felt incapable of making myself agreeable. I *walked* home to shake down the food!

I must dash round to hospital: so with best love to Christie.

Tuesday, 11.30 A.M., *October* 19, 1915

You mentioned in the letter I had from you yesterday that you had been two days without a letter from me — but then you had twice lately mentioned having two letters from me in one day, and it is inevitable that if two of my letters arrive together there must be a day without any — if you have two letters on the same day 'twill then mean that two days with no letter must follow. . . .

I fancy that I *and* Wilcox between us live on less than *one* English servant, *i.e.*, we live on less than five shillings a day between us, and that includes not only food, but drink, lighting (petroleum, etc.).

I enclose some eucalyptus leaves off one of the many trees here: if you get a cold have them boiled in a small saucepan, and after sweetening with honey, or treacle or sugar, drink the "tisane" as hot as you can take it, after you are in bed. It is excellent. You should repeat the dose every night till you are cured.

Yesterday —— and I took Miss Susie and Miss Maria Pringle for a long walk in the wild parts of the park *behind* the Trianons in the direction of St. Cyr. It was a perfect St. Luke's summer day, and the trees and glades were too lovely: I have never seen such exquisite autumn colouring, and yet very English. The trees were all our own sort of trees, elms, chestnuts, beeches, oaks, alders, etc.

Then we went back and had tea, after which I had church at the hospital.

I must stop. I can send heaps more eucalyptus leaves.

Thursday Morning, 10 A.M., *October* 21, 1915

Versailles in the mornings at this season is like a city in the clouds. I suppose all the thick mists come from the forests with which we are surrounded for miles

in every direction. To-day the fog is the densest we have had, but I expect about noon it will yield and turn to a soft, sunny afternoon.

I had your letter of Monday just now, in which you tell me of Winifred's Sunday afternoon visit: I am sure you enjoyed the quiet chat with her.

Yesterday I went to tea with the Pringles, who had half expected a tea-party, but the other guests weren't able to come (except one) and I was delighted. That one was a young Anglican chaplain, a tall, clean pink young divine, with an air of always saying "Dearly beloved Brethren."

The eldest Miss P. said, "I know you are always sending your mother post-cards . . . would you send her these? They may interest her because she knows America, and I think they are pretty." So I send them on, though of course Pennsylvania is very far from *your* part of America. The Pringles' mother was a Pennsylvanian, from Philadelphia, a Miss Duncan, also of a good Scotch family, and I fancy, from all I hear them say, very charming, refined, and clever.

How clever you are and economical! I am sure the tea-jacket and lilac gown together are charming: I wish *I* could make new tunics out of old breeches!

I must dry up because I have nothing more to tell you.

Thursday Night, October 21, 1915

I HAVE just come in from a long and delightful motor-excursion with the Pringles. They picked me up here at two and we went by St. Cyr, through Trappes, Houdan, etc., to Montfort, where we got out to visit the church and then the ruins of the castle.

The church has a very ugly, late (seventeenth century) façade in a villainous pseudo-classic taste: but the east end is lovely, with beautiful flying buttresses. I enclose a few cards, one of the approach to the little town from

the south — on which I have put "A": one of the approach from the west, with the castle ruins to the right, marked "B": one of the south side of the church, marked "C": one of a street in the town, marked "D": one of the beautiful east-end and apse of the church, marked "E," and the one marked "F" illustrates one of a series of splendid stained-glass windows running almost all round the church — not early glass, but sixteenth century Renaissance, quite superb of its sort.

The card marked "G" (at the back) is of the ruins of the castle. The situation of the castle reminds one of Arques, but the ruins consist of the tower here shown that only dates from 1498, the lower donjon-tower, and a few detached lumps of rubble masonry — nothing near so fine as Arques. The great interest of Montfort is its being the domain of the great Simon de Montfort, so famous in our own history.

After leaving it we came home a different way by Mantes, a much more considerable place with a cathedral; but we were so late, and the fog was getting so thick, that we only stayed three or four minutes to admire the cathedral, and came on: so I could not get you any cards.

The drive was all through a beautiful country, very "accidenté," narrow valleys, so close together as almost to seem like the furrows of some Titanic ploughman, and all bristling with woods, whose trees were of every conceivable colour, russet, carmine, scarlet, orange, lemon, melon-rind, and grey-green.

We came home through St. Germain, passing close by the palace where James II held his exiled court: it stood up pallid in a shroud of mist.

And that is all of the day's doings that gives me anything to write about.

Shan't we (F. and I) miss the Pringles when they go south? They are so boundlessly hospitable and kind, and they are themselves so nice: always cheery and full

of a piquant sprightliness, chaffing each other remorselessly all the time. I think they are the very best sort of Americans, really well-born and absolutely well-bred: the mixture of the South Carolinian father and Pennsylvanian mother is most agreeable. You know Philadelphia, whence their mother came, is supposed to be the most aristocratic city in America. The Americans say, "Boston for what you know: Philadelphia for who you are; and New York for — what you've got."

A certain Norman Marquis found me out the other day and bored me to death over the Normans and their grandeur, and our own direct descent from the reigning family of Normandy: he wanted me to take part in a great Norman réunion, and I flatly refused, saying I had very different work here, and dropped him and his Normans promptly.

Saturday Morning, 7.35, *October* 23, 1915

I AM just beginning a letter to you before going across to the Hermitage convent to say Mass. It is a very cold, bright, frosty morning, after a night of clear, bitter cold moonlight.

I am to meet F. about 11.30 and we are to go in to Paris together to lunch at Lady Austin-Lee's.

Yesterday I did nothing all day but the following. At a quarter to eight I said Mass: at nine buried a poor soldier; then worked in hospital till 1.30. Then wrote letters till tea: then evening service at hospital, from 5.30 to 6.45, then home to say "office," write letters, etc., till bed-time.

I had two letters from you yesterday, one written on Tuesday morning and one on Tuesday afternoon. In the second you announce safe arrival of the furs and stockings: I am quite delighted that they please you so much. I hoped that you *would* like them, and really I thought this grey Siberian fur prettier than some far

more costly. Also I thought that the stockings seemed warm and comfortable.

10 A.M.

I HAVE said Mass, breakfasted, and received my letters, including yours of Wednesday and one from Winifred Gater.

The furs and stockings seem to have been a most successful present: and I am very glad you think the latter good quality — I think French people think more of quality and less of "cheapness" than we do. But these stockings were anything but dear, 3 fr. 50, a pair, I think, *i.e.*, about 2/8.

Among Father Wrafter's recent gifts to myself is a very soft and warm rug — about the same quality as the one Lady Glenconner gave you, though of a different colour: and it makes me very comfortable.

To-morrow I have to go to tea with the Pringles to meet Madame de Montebello.

Yesterday I absent-mindedly sallied forth in *black trousers* and khaki tunic. I met Wilcox, who said, grimly, "Well, Monsignor, I'm glad you've got *any* on, you're that absent-minded."

All the same I'm not a patch on *him* for up in the moon-ness. He is capable of putting the meat to roast in my bed.

Sunday, October 24, 1915

YESTERDAY I went in to Paris to lunch with the Austin-Lees, whom I had not seen since early in September. There we met also Comtesse d'Osmoy, who was passing a few days in Paris — her home is far away near the sea in Normandy, in a big château called Plessis. She was very nice, as she always is, and seemed delighted to see me again. She enquired keenly after you; your miniature made such an impression on her!

Lady Austin-Lee looked younger and prettier than ever in black — mourning for the only relative she had in France, who died the other day at Orleans. . . .

The fourth guest was a very young American man called Scott, from Rome, where he has lived almost his whole life with his mother, a very nice fellow.

I got back just in time for my evening service at 5.30 in the hospital. And that is my day for yesterday.

To-day, Sunday, I am not very fit, a sort of gastric bother:[1] and a scandalous tongue! (I don't mean as talking goes, but to look at.)

I was going to the Pringles, this afternoon, but don't feel up to it. . . .

Monday, 1.30 P.M., *October* 25, 1915

It is a very sour, cross-looking day, with very little light and no warmth; no breeze, but only a dank emanation from the sodden woods — the sort of day that makes evening, with drawn curtains and lighted lamps, very welcome.

I am much better than I was yesterday, and have just eaten an excellent luncheon. By to-morrow I shall be quite well: but I had a regular chill of the liver — a thing I often do get at home.

After Mass yesterday I came home and went back to bed, and stayed there, and ate nothing; which treatment brought about the desired results.

I hope you will not try to economise over fires and catch a chill.

I heard from Roger to-day and send the letter on to you: also Mrs. Newland's. And I had yours of Friday, acknowledging receipt of some eucalyptus leaves.

I must stop or I shall miss the mail.

[1] It was not "gastric," but much more serious. He steadily became more ill till after his operation in January. [Ed.]

Tuesday, 11 A.M., *October* 26, 1915

I RECEIVED this morning your letter telling of the arrival of the five officers. I am delighted to hear that you made them welcome, but I don't think you would be likely to do anything else. If the house of one officer in the army is not open in war time to other officers I don't know what house *should* be. If any more come, please think of them as if they were *me*, and let them be treated as you would like *me* to be treated, if cold, tired, and hungry, I knocked at any door for hospitality.

I am quite well again now after my gastric attack of Sunday; and I am going in to Paris for a drive with the Pringles in their motor-car at 1.30. So I must bustle up as I have not done my hospital yet — it is very empty for the moment.

It is a rather unpleasant day, raw, and with a biting wind; but even as I write the sun comes out to do his best for us.

I must really be off. So good-bye.

Wednesday, 11.30 A.M., *October* 27, 1915

IT is a very bright (though far from *sultry*) October morning, cheery and healthy. It began badly yesterday but turned out brilliantly fine, and I had a very nice drive into Paris in the afternoon with the Pringles: we went through the park and forest of St. Cloud — the palace no longer exists, it having been burned by the Communards in 1871.

The colouring of the trees was splendid, and there are magnificent views out across the Seine valley.

We went to see Madame de Montebello, whom I found charming: she is very picturesque, with grey hair powdered white; she is very "grande dame," and imposing, but most cordial, and full of "esprit" and brightness. We cottoned to each other promptly. She

was French Ambassadress at St. Petersburg when Lady O'Conor was our own Ambassadress there. By the way I heard from her to-day, and she enquires much after you.

I see in to-day's paper that young Yvo Charteris, son of Lady Wemyss, to whom I sent the helmet, was killed on the seventeenth. I think that is the fourth nephew Lady Glenconner has had killed since the war began: and, as he was in the Grenadiers with Bim, I fear it will terrify her.

On getting back from Paris yesterday I had to give Holy Communion to a poor soldier who is very badly wounded — a big piece of shrapnel wedged into his lung: then I had evening church, a daily event as long as the men will come.

I must dry up and go round to hospital now.

Saturday, October 30, 1915

I HAVE just received your letter of Wednesday, and in it the envelope of my own letter to you of last Sunday opened by the "Base" censor out here — Paris, Rouen, or Havre, I don't know which. As it is the first letter from me he had opened, out of the tons I have posted, I can't grumble.

The duck arrived at the same time; thus announced by Wilcox, "Enter forth His Highness (hope not) the chicken."

The duck is splendid, a very large one, and well-grown, well-fed, well-killed, and well-trussed. It shall be roasted for our Sunday dinner to-morrow, and will last us several days. A chicken last week lasted us all Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and made us the soup that finished our supper on Thursday! Mary sent a killing letter with the duck, which I will duly answer.

Yesterday I went to tea with the Pringles: a semi-tea party, with about five other guests, all of whom bored

me: but I stayed on after them and enjoyed the time with my kind hostesses alone. To-day I lunch there, as I have told you.

It is a grumpy-looking day; sunless and bleak; but not really very cold.

I don't like your *occasional* allusions to having a fire: you ought to have one every day. MIND! Have good fires, and keep your old bones comfortable, which will save doctoring, and will keep you out of the blues.

I must go off to hospital now, so good-bye and with best love to Christie.

Sunday, October 31, 1915

It is a wet, drizzly morning, not cold but cheerless-looking, and one's room, with a good fire, is a very pleasant place to be in.

After Mass at the hospital, and seeing a few patients rather specially ill, I came home, breakfasted, and am now writing this to you.

Mary's duck is roasting downstairs, and filling the house with excellent odours of an unwontedly good Sunday dinner. I will drink Mary's health in the gravy!

Yesterday I lunched at the Pringles — a party of about a dozen, five of themselves, Marquise de Montebello, a Captain Belz (Alsatian, who nas only one leg left, having had the other blown off fighting for France), an old half-French, half-American, Mr. Vail, etc., and myself. We had an excellent lunch and I had long talks with Mme. de Montebello. She is granddaughter-in-law of Napoleon's Marshal Lannes.

I must dry up — take this round to the hospital.

Monday, All Saints' Day, November 1, 1915

A very wet "Toussaint," but not at all cold. I had Mass at hospital at eight and directly after breakfast went back there to give Holy Communion to a man

who was rather bad. This afternoon after luncheon I go back to give it to another man.

Yes! poor young Yvo Charteris was already killed when I sent him the helmet. I fear it will make Lady Glenconner *terrified* for Bim. The officers of our Guards have suffered fearful losses from the very beginning of the war. I duly received the mittens yesterday, and do not despise them at all: you may be sure I should never despise anything made by you: when we have cold, raw days I will wear them, but to-day is rather muggy and close.

I want you to make me a little sort of pad (rather like a kettle-holder!) for cleaning my razor on after use. It should be rather thick — just as a kettle-holder is: one side might be made of coarse linen (old rag, a bit of old table-cloth, napkin, or towel): the other side of cloth, velvet, etc. On the linen side one would *wipe* the razor, on the other one would polish it.

I am going to tea with the Pringles after leaving the hospital, and I am afraid that will be the good-bye visit. I shall miss them terribly; for I am really *fond* of them: and they are cordial hospitality itself.

I must dry up (I wish the weather would!) and so with best love to Christie.

All Souls' Day, November 2, 1915

I HAVE just got back from the big function at the cathedral — a High Mass of Requiem, with "Allocution" by the Bishop. The cathedral was crammed and a very large proportion of the congregation were French officers and soldiers. The singing was fine and Mgr. Gibier's discourse was just what it should be — simple, tender, sincere, direct, full of sympathy and *heart:* not too long, and not too *eloquent!* I was able to understand every word.

Before the Mass I talked to him, and he was very

cordial and nice; he has a wonderfully sweet and good face, singularly like Pius X.

It was rather a struggle to get there in time; but I *was* (ten minutes before Mass began), for the cathedral is right at the other end of Versailles and I had *three* Masses of my own to say at the hospital first. The Pope now gives leave for three Masses on All Souls' Day as on Christmas Day. I got up at quarter to five! Yesterday afternoon I went to tea with the Pringles, and stayed on till nearly seven, chatting very comfortably: how I shall miss them!

Your letter of Saturday arrived to-day and I return the postage rate; but I doubt if it concerns me, as our rates are special: *nothing* for a letter under four ounces, and so on.

Wednesday Morning, November 3, 1915

. . . This will be a scrubby short letter, because (1) I have nothing to say; (2) no time to say it.

I received your letter of Sunday this morning, in which you promise me a cake from Mrs. K. When I glanced through that bill of Hart's I noticed that the prices are all *much* lower than what one has to pay here — so I was pleasantly surprised.

I went to tea with the Pringles again yesterday, and stayed on very late chatting. To-day I go again — and to-morrow, at 8 A.M., they start for Biarritz in their car: the servants going by train. I shall miss them terribly: they are the only *friends* I have made here except F. and the A.-L.'s, and their departure will leave an irreparable gap. The weather, very sour and scowly the last day or two, has brightened up, and to-day is a regular smiling *October* day, which really should have arrived last week.

I sent you a harum-scarum book called "Manalive" by G. K. Chesterton: it rather makes my bones ache

(my mind's bones) it is so jumpy. But I must confess it keeps me interested.

Friday Morning, November 5, 1915

. . . I AM afraid that on Sunday you will have no letter from me, though you will receive a very amusing book — "Some Experiences of an Irish Resident Magistrate." Yesterday I had such a crowd of little things to do in the morning that I missed the post altogether. To go back to Wednesday: I went to tea for positively the last time to my kind Pringles, and stayed on till nearly seven. I really felt sad saying good-bye to them, and cannot tell you how much I shall feel their loss. However, instead of grumbling at that I had better think gratefully of the many pleasant hours they have given me during the last couple of months.

They were to start at 8.30 yesterday morning; lunch at Romorantin, motor on to Limoges, dine and sleep there, and motor on to Biarritz to-day.

Yesterday I gave Lady Austin-Lee luncheon in Paris, at a restaurant called "L'Escargot," rather a famous place, but not at all smart, nor in a smart part of Paris. L'Escargot is its name because *snails* are the specialty of the house. Lady A.-L. and I had both of us a curiosity to go to the place and to try the snails. Some of the people we saw ate *three* dozen each! but we only ordered one dozen and a half between us, and, though I ate eight out of my nine, Lady A.-L. only ate six out of hers. The taste is all right, but they look appalling!! I am glad to have tried them, but don't intend to try again. After the snails we had another specialty of the house — *pigs' feet*, first stewed, then roasted: not nasty, but not particularly good. Mind, this place, though rather in the slums near the "Halles," is anything but cheap: there were several millionaires lunching there near us!

I'm glad all the papers, etc., I send make a little pass-time for you. I hardly ever waste a paper, it is sure to be welcome to someone.

Sunday, November 7, 1915

. . . It is a *very* November day, pale, dim, wreathed in white mist, and with a chill breath, though not a real wind. A regular *Ellesmere* day of late autumn, a tree smell everywhere in the dank air! I do like the French turning up their noses at our English weather: for their own is its twin brother.

I said Mass at the hospital and afterwards went to four different wards to give Holy Communion to men who are rather bad. Then I came home, breakfasted, read your letter of Thursday and the *New York Herald* — which I sent on to you. I sent you an Album of Crochet a day or two ago, and now I send another. I thought you might care to send them round by Bert to Miss Polly Burtt, but if you care to keep them I should, of course, like that better still. The cake has not arrived yet, but will probably come to-night. Our letters come in the morning, but our parcels only arrive about twelve hours later. The cards I enclose are from the Pringles, despatched as they sped south in the car from Limoges and Perigueux. . . . I miss them sadly, but no more than I knew I should.

Monday, November 8, 1915

. . . I enclose a further flight of post-cards, fired off by the Pringles on their way south. They have now reached Biarritz, and very soon I shall have a shower of letters as well!

Last night, when I looked out before going to bed, it was thick fog: during the night that changed to a very hard frost without any fog: and an hour after I got up the frost had gone and the fog come back.

It is very cold, and most opportunely a new top-coat arrived last night from England, what we call a "British Warm," a rather short, very comfortable and cosey uniform overcoat. I wore it this morning going out for Mass and found it a joy.

I told you that I gave Holy Communion to four men yesterday after Mass: one of them died at midday, poor lad. At my little evening service last night I noticed a *very* intelligent-looking young fellow, with rather a handsome face, Irish colouring and eyes: as they were going away I nodded to him to stop a moment, and asked him his name. "Patrick McGill." "Where do you come from?" "Donegal: but I live at Windsor." "I suppose you have only been a soldier since the beginning of the war?" "Yes." "What are you by occupation?" "A novelist." Then I remembered . . . just before the war I remember reading reviews of two novels of his, praised to the skies; one called "The Dead End," and the other "The Ratpit," and seeing a very interesting portrait of him in one of the papers. He is only twenty-four. We had a long talk and I found him interesting, but a little *grand*, especially in his way of talking.

I send you a book of W. W. Jacobs, called "The Lady of the Barge," a bundle of short stories, some very funny, some very weird. I hope some of them won't keep you awake at night. I must go to hospital. . . .

Friday, November 12, 1915

. . . Such a day! Tearing wind, driving rain — and chimneys trying to smoke: not quite succeeding, because every French fireplace has a thin sheet of iron to draw down in front of the fire, and one can leave it half down if the chimney is trying to smoke.

I went to see F. again and found him a shade better, but so weak that in the hour I stayed by his side he

hardly spoke a dozen words. He asked after you and wished he could write to you: he really is *fond* of you, though he never saw you. I thought he seemed very sad, though very quiet. He said to me, "It would be less trouble to die once for all, on the field of battle, than bit by bit like this."

While I was there, Madame de Montebello came to see him, but only stayed in his room a moment. She is head of all the Croix Rouge of France, and is going on a tour of inspection of hospitals: on her return I am to lunch with her.

I went on my return to Versailles to tea with Comtesse de Sercey at the Hôtel des Reservoirs here; she had with her a Comte de Luz and his daughter: all three very nice, and particularly cordial and friendly. They had come out from Paris on purpose to give me this tea.

Monday, November 15, 1915

. . . The very stormy weather in the Channel has disorganised our mails and I daresay you will be getting my letters irregularly. On Saturday we had no mail, yesterday we got Saturday's: and to-day I have just received your letter dated Thursday which ought to have arrived yesterday — *i.e.*, we are still a day behind-hand, and to-day's has not yet come in.

After Mass yesterday I had hospital work to occupy me till it was time to rush off to the train for Paris, where I was lunching with Lady Austin-Lee. So I could only send you a word to say I had no time to write. The party at Lady A.-L.'s consisted of herself, Sir Henry, and three Scotts, a Mr. and Mrs. S. and a young Mr. Alex. Scott. They were all three Americans and very nice ones.

After luncheon I read aloud the instalment of "French and English" in the *Month* (of November) and the ladies wept.

I will get you the crochet stuff in Paris on Thursday when I am lunching there with the Scotts.

I am going to a tea-fight at the Huntingtons to-day: to-morrow I am invited to go to Mlle. de Missiessy's wedding, and am giving tea to Lady Austin-Lee and Mr. Scott: and so with another lunch in Paris on Thursday you see I am quite gay. I am so sorry to hear of Dr. Allan's illness; poor old man, he has not had a very joyful life since we have known him: and I always liked him, if only because he was so old-fashioned and so really a gentleman. Mrs. K.'s cake is excellent and I must write and tell her so. But I have seemed to have so very little time for letters lately.

I really must stop and go round to hospital.

November 19, 1915

. . . I WENT into Paris yesterday to lunch with the Scotts (*i.e.* Mrs. Scott, and her son Alexander). It was a regular London yellow fog, and we lunched by electric light: very cold too: but the Scotts' rooms were too hot, heated with "central heating," as they call it here, *i.e.* no visible fire, hot puffs of hot air from somewhere — detestable, I think. They have very handsome rooms in the Langhorn Hotel, Rue de Boccador, and the luncheon was A1. Mrs. Scott is really charming, extraordinarily young-looking to be mother of a son of Alexander's age (about twenty) and with a charming face. Lady Austin-Lee was the only other guest.

To-day is cold and foggy too, but here the fog isn't much. I expect it is nearly dark in Paris.

Do you remember how often I have mentioned the long border here? It was really magnificent, over a thousand good geraniums, many beautiful fuchsias (say fifty or sixty), many abutilons and other good plants — and they have left all those plants out to be destroyed and they now *are* destroyed, all black and hideous from the hard frosts, and black and hideous they will stay

there all through the winter. It makes *me* sad and would make *you* frantic! The soldiers who were always working for Beranek would have got them all in to the greenhouses in an hour or two.

Your letter of Tuesday has duly arrived. I am always so grateful for your cheery, pleasant letters; they are a daily relief to my mind. I don't care sixpence whether they contain news or not; all I want is to see your writing and know you are well and cheery. *Never* bother making out a long letter if you feel indisposed to it — three lines would do for me, but for those three lines I look out eagerly.

I must go forth to hospital.

Saturday, November 20, 1915

. . . I RECEIVED to-day your letter of Wednesday, in which you mention having received the mantilla from Miss Maria Pringle. I have at once sent on your letter to her. The mantilla is entirely her own gift to you, but I believe it was pinned up into Spanish form by the Duchess of San Carlos's maid exactly as she does her mistress's when the Duchess is in waiting (she is lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Spain: and at court all ladies must wear the mantilla). I am so glad you like it, and I know Miss Pringle liked sending it.

Yesterday I went to see F. and found him much better and in very good spirits — of course still confined strictly to bed. While I was there Lady Austin-Lee came over from Paris to see him and so he had plenty of company.

On getting back to Versailles I went to tea with a Madame Guyon, whom I don't think I ever mentioned to you, but whom I used to meet constantly at the Pringles: and they begged me to cultivate her. She is clever and pleasant; her mother was there, too (they do not live together), as a guest like myself: the mother is called Madame de Salette; she is also clever and lets

you know it. I enjoyed my visit; they both have heaps to say and not a word of gossip: the rooms are very comfortable, like English rooms in a really good house belonging to well-born and well-bred people, and the tea was just like an English tea. Madame Guyon has beautiful things — miniatures, furniture, china, old fans, etc., and Madame de Salette paints in oils *extremely* well — portraits chiefly.

I am reading a very good (new) life of Lord Lyons, whom I used to know well. He was the brother of my old Duchess of Norfolk and our Ambassador in Washington, Paris, etc.

The book interests *me* immensely, and as it is my own I will send it to you as soon as I have finished it.

Monday, November 22, 1915

. . . To-DAY is the least gloomy-looking we have had for quite a long time: there is actually a pallid attempt at sunshine: whereas yesterday was black and bitter, a most ferocious east wind that seemed to search for one's bones — it did not find mine, owing to my "British Warm," and a thick, woolly waistcoat I wear under my tunic. The knitted comforter to go under the collar of the coat that you made me has arrived and I will wear it if I can, but there is not much room under my collar; what with crossbelt, "British Warm," etc., I have so much on.

I went to see F. yesterday after a hurried luncheon, and found him really much better; he had got up at eleven and remained up till 1.30 (after his luncheon), but was then tired and glad enough to go back to bed. They are going to operate on him *again! ! !* Though it is only a slight operation, I think it lamentable: certain nerves have to be operated upon in his legs.

I cannot tell you how cold it was waiting at Chaville station for my train home after leaving him. I never

felt a worse east wind; however, I was thoroughly warmly clad, and the train as warm as a toast when it arrived. Chaville is two stations from here on the road to Paris; the forest (largely birch) is very pretty there. After my evening service at the hospital I came home and sat by my cosey fire reading Lord Newton's "Life of Lord Lyons" — very comfortable, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The only interruption was letting Wilcox read aloud to me for half an hour — this he does for his stammering, and it makes a wonderful difference. What do you think he reads aloud? Mrs. Markham's "History of England": it carries me back nearly fifty years, to when you used to read it aloud to Pierce and me when we lived in Scotland Street at Ellesmere. I remember the pictures so well, and love to look at them. This morning I got two letters from you, one written on Thursday afternoon and one on Friday morning — enclosing one from Aunt Agnes.

Most of all I am glad that you are not fretting about my absence at Christmas. I would *much rather* not go home on leave: To go home for Christmas only would upset us both and would almost certainly lead to my losing Versailles, which certainly suits me in many ways. I must dry up; so good-bye for the moment. . . . My Christmas dinner shall come from you — duck and plum pudding!

Tuesday, November 23, 1915

. . . We *live* in the clouds here: for quite a long time it has been unbroken fog, and a *very* cold fog, penetrating to the bones and the marrow of the bones. I lived six years in London, and never experienced so much fog during all that time as I have already seen this winter at Versailles. However, you need not pity me, for I keep up an excellent fire in my room from 6.30 A.M. to 11 P.M., and I am warmly clad and well fed. Last night

there was a hard frost *with* the fog, and the combination was pretty stiff.

Yesterday afternoon I went to Paris to pay a round of visits, and as everyone was out I got through a good many. While I was there the Annexe to the Bon Marche was on fire and if I had known it I should have gone to see it; but only learned it from the *New York Herald* this morning. A million francs' worth of damage was done — and as the Annexe was used as a military hospital, I wonder if it was set on fire by Germans. Within the last few days the following notice has made its appearance everywhere, in railway carriages, trams, libraries, cafés, etc. (emanating from the Government):

"*Taisez-vous! Oreilles ennemies vous écoutent: des espions partout.*"

When I got back I *cozed* up to my fire, and finished the first volume of the "Life of Lord Lyons," which now I send on to you. I daresay it will not interest you as much as it does me, for you did not know Lord Lyons: and you are not so much interested in this sort of diplomatic history — or history from the inside: and the book is quite empty of anecdotes and social sidelights: Lord L. was, like the Duchess, physically incapable of either gossiping or listening to gossip. Still the period is absorbingly interesting (the American war of North and South while Lord L. was ambassador at Washington; and the Franco-Prussian war while he was Ambassador here).

Your letter of Saturday arrived this morning: I will certainly order the turkey and tell Hart to be sure and send a nice young bird. I shall order sausages to go with it. And as I have for years sent the same to Aunt Agnes I will not fail this year. I think I should like Mrs. K. to send her a plum pudding too. If you do make me any crochet, let it be narrow, not too fine, not too minute or *niggly* a pattern, about seven feet long, for the altar cloth in my chapel here.

There is a small short alb in one of the drawers in my bedroom with thick heavy Venetian point lace (made for me long ago by old Mrs. Huthwaite), a lace rather like sea-weed; the alb is not resplendent, but I should like it to use while the one I wear here every day is being washed for Christmas. Tell Mary, please, and *don't* send anything else with it. It will travel much better for being light and having nothing else in the parcel: oh, by the way, she *may* send with it three silk girdles (green, red and purplish) that are in the same place: they weigh almost nothing.

Wednesday, November 24, 1915

. . . For days we have had nothing but hard frost, fog and east wind: to-day the wind has gone south, the frost has disappeared, it is almost warm, and the morning began soft and wet, a mild rain that soon stopped; and now, though the sun is not shining it is light and almost cheerful: till to-day twilight has been the most brilliant light we have had even at noon.

I went to Chaville again yesterday to see F. and found him up, and hobbling about, and in very good spirits, though tired and weak. I stayed till four, then had to fly off to catch my train back to Versailles: on the way I met Madame M., who was (as she always is) very pessimistic about F.'s health. He had been talking to me as to how he would earn his living after leaving the army. "Poor boy," she said, "there will never be any need."

She thinks his days will be very few: but I do not. He has an amazing vitality, and that with his pluck and the *desire* to live will carry him far.

She does not talk in this lachrymose way to *him:* only to me. I came in and read Lord Lyons all evening — and "Land and Water," which you will receive on Sunday morning.

I send you to-day's *New York Herald:* in the back page is an account by Camille Flammarion, the veteran astronomer, of a wonderful meteorite that is supposed to have fallen near Rambouillet, the light of which was visible here (and it was audible here). Flammarion says it came from so distant a star that it must have taken at least seven million years on its way! No wonder it burst: *I* should if I had to go on a journey of that length.

Reading the "Life of Lord Lyons" one realises that without a shadow of doubt Germany began getting ready for this war the moment the Franco-Prussian war was over: and to me it seems lamentable that we did not help France then, in 1870. If we had, this war would never have been and the German Empire would probably have never been. But the English always had an idea that there was a *natural friendship* between us and the Germans, and that the Germans were good moral people, who read the Bible and went to Sunday-school, whereas the French were naughty, fond of flirting, and not to be encouraged. I'm sure that was Queen Victoria's view, too.

I have made a little discovery on my own hook; if water is very *hard* (it is terribly so here) you can soften it and prevent the soap curdling in it by putting a pinch of carbonate of soda into it before washing in it: and this also prevents one's skin chapping, quite wonderfully. . . .

Saturday, November 27, 1915

. . . It is Christmas card sort of weather, very cold, very dry, very frosty, with glittering white bushes catching the sunlight, but very snowy-looking clouds almost hiding the sun. What is called very healthy weather. It was extraordinarily warm yesterday and as I walked from Chaville station to F.'s hospital the forest looked lovely — a wintry sunshine was shining through it,

undergrowth and atmosphere had the same purple-rose tint, the birch-trees were like rods of polished silver, and one could see, through the tree-tops, pale forget-me-not peeps of sky. The odd thing was that at four o'clock, in spite of its having been so warm all day, it began snowing, and down it came, a fierce, thick snow-storm. I walked to the station through snow, and soon one could see nothing but snow out of the carriage windows, all else blotted out. The cold to-day is piercing, and if it is like this with you I hope you are stopping in bed. I shouldn't at all object to stopping there myself.

I wrote to Miss Maria Pringle last night and repeated all you said about the mantilla, which will please her.

As to young ——, I am not on your side: I think he is just the sort of young man who *should* enlist. He has three or four brothers, his mother is in no way dependent on him — exactly the contrary — and though he is quite strong enough to go and fight, he is not the sort of man whose children England particularly wants! And then his life in civilian occupation is a perpetual anxiety and struggle. It is sheer sluggishness that keeps him back.

Sunday, November 28, 1915

. . . When I wrote to you yesterday morning the English mail had not come in: when it did it brought me *two* letters from you, one written on Wednesday and one on Thursday. So the latter only took forty-eight hours to come.

It is terribly cold still: hard, bitter frost, but not gloomy: there is blue sky and sunshine, and at night brilliant moonlight. I keep up a fine fire in my room and am uncommonly comfortable by it. There I finished the Lord Lyons book last night, and was very sorry to do so. It is not so much Lord Lyons that interests me, but all the diplomatic history. The book is like

himself, solid, excellent; without anecdote or meanderings: but I doubt if you will care much for it: though Lord L. knew every important personage of his time, there is scarcely an anecdote about anyone of them: and so the book has not what is generally the special attraction of such Memoirs. And it stops abruptly with Lord L.'s death, just as England is about to make her occupation of Egypt permanent. At the end is a short "Lord Lyons in private life" by Mrs. Wilfred Ward, Lady O'Conor's sister, and Herbert's mother, who, of course, was Lord Lyons' grandniece; more interesting than the book itself.

I cannot thank you enough for your daily letter: no matter if it were only half a page; it is just to know that you are well and comfortable — that makes all the difference to me. Winifred wrote also saying I might like to hear from an outside source how well she thought you, but begging me not to let you go out in the bitter winds you have been having.

Excuse this short scribble. I've no time for more.

Monday, November 29, 1915

. . . I AM taking a leaf out of your book and having a day's rest-cure in bed! It is a beastly day and I began with an attack of neuralgia: so I am doing the lazy. The neuralgia, however, has departed, unlamented. I send you a *Pearson's Weekly* not because it is your line, but because of a rather remarkable article on the Kaiser's madness.

The hard frost and bright sun have disappeared, and it is muggy and pouring rain and very dark, and very gloomy. But I am uncommonly cosey in my room here, and thoroughly enjoying my "off" day, which I am the better enabled to take that the hospital is nearly empty.

Every night when I undress and go to bed in this excellent room by an excellent fire, I think of the

millions of poor lads freezing in the trenches and ask God to forgive me for any spirit of grumbling. . . .

Have no post-cards about deceased priests come within the last few months? I am bound to say Mass for each, under pain of mortal sin, and I have had none for ages — surely some priests must have died! *Please* see that these cards are forwarded at once. If any have not been, but are still in the house, send me the names on them. . . . If not, I shall have to write to the Cardinal about it, and ask him for a list of all priests deceased in England since I left home.

Tuesday, November 30, 1915

. . . AGAIN no mail from England to-day, though I daresay they will crop up before evening: so I have no letter of yours to acknowledge.

To-day is very fine; blue sky, soft air and sunshine — certainly the climate of Northern France is as versatile as that of England. I feel very lively to-day after my rest-cure yesterday. Of course I did not *sleep*, though I stayed in bed, but read all day: a life of Sir Robert Morier, who was, like Lord Lyons, a British Ambassador: but like him in nothing else: the *book*, I think, may turn out more amusing than Lord L.'s life, because it is gossipy and deals with all sorts of people in a light and rather flippant fashion, but so far I do not think Sir Robert Morier compares particularly well with Lord Lyons, the former *full* of himself, flighty, full of moods and ups and downs, and, as it seems to me, feather-headed. Still one *learns* a lot from both of these books. I send you a *New York Herald* with a very scathing but very tragic cartoon in it, representing the "Lusitania" children's shades saying to the shades of "Ancona's" children, "Never mind; you'll soon be forgotten."

As no mails have come to-day I have not yet received either the alb or the pretty thing you made for Miss

Pringle, which I will send on directly it arrives. Don't be excited if a large parcel arrives from me; it is only my big motor coat which I cannot use here, it not being uniform; in one of the pockets I shall stuff eucalpytus leaves.

I must dry up and go to hospital.

Tuesday Evening, November 30, 1915

. . . When I wrote to you this morning no English mail had come in, but since then one has arrived bringing me two letters from you for me and one for F., which I will take him to-morrow. I went to see him this afternoon and found him well and very cheerful. He was in uniform, the first time since he was opéré, and we went out for a little walk in the forest. How I wished you were there; it was so lovely and you could have made exquisite sketches of it — like two we have framed in the drawing-room, leafless woods with wonderful lights among the trees. I had no idea at all till I came to live at Versailles how beautiful the near neighbourhood of Paris was; the forests run quite close up to it on this, the western side: and it is not *flat* forest, but a country of narrow valleys between ridges of hill, all clothed in woodland. The road to Versailles from Paris twists along one of these valleys, and there are houses the whole way, so that going by tram it is like one long, interminable street — but at the back of the houses the forest runs close down to their gardens. Even in Louis XIV's time the forest between Versailles and Paris was so wild and untrodden that it was full of game and the fiercer animals of the chase, — wolves, wild boars and they say even bears.

We climbed by a woodland road up to the flat top of one of the narrow ridges, and through the trees got a brief view, across one valley, across the corner of another to Sèvres, and beyond, about five miles away, lay Paris,

pearly-white, shining through a sunny haze. One could plainly see the huge tall dome of the Pantheon. On the other side was another deep valley, filled with leafless trees, and in the bottom the étangs, or pools of Ville d'Avrage, like immense pearls caught in an opal net. Where we were the trees were all birches, and their leafless tops, all pink rose, were lovelier than if they were covered with foliage. Their boles, smooth and shining, were like rods of polished silver. On a tree-trunk I was interested to see a little board on which was painted "To Morte Fontaine," which was the country home of Joseph, the eldest of Napoleon's brothers, King of Spain, and husband of Queen Julie Clary, my old friend's Aunt Julie; she was much fonder of her quiet life there than of court life, and hated leaving it, which she only did for a very short time.

Reading Lord Lyons' life makes me more than ever ashamed of our monstrous disregard of propriety in letting the Prince Imperial go to Zululand, and our letting him go with such carelessness as to the conditions of his safety that he was killed for nothing—not in battle, but by sheer disregard of the precautions we ought to have insisted upon. Even the Republicans here were scandalised and indignant when the news of his being killed thus arrived: and there is hardly any doubt he would have been Emperor had we taken proper care of him: and if he had many things would have followed a different course here.

When we were in the wood F. said "Oh, François, I have something to tell you. They are going to operate on me again." Poor boy: I wonder there is any of him left! However, he takes it all with his unfailing cheerfulness and courage.

I enjoyed our little stroll: I always feel tons better for a walk in fields or woods: the town cobwebs clear away and I feel more manly and cheerful. You do not know how hard it is to keep my temper, so to speak,

and I often rail against "destiny," which is all very rotten, for there is no such thing, only the great Will of God, who is kinder than any plan of our own, and who has done so much for me, and for you, too. Certainly for a man on Active Service, I have nothing to grumble at: and if I am parted from you, alas, how many of my friends have had to make the greatest parting of all.

Wednesday Evening, December 1, 1915

. . . This morning when I opened the windows there was the soft smell of the south wind, really sweet as if blowing from scented woods and flowered fields: it was quite warm, and the sky was almost without clouds, but I said "just the sort of day that turns to rain," and so it did. When I went to Chaville to see F. the rain was pelting down, and there was no walk in the forest for us to-day: and it was still pouring when I came back to Versailles.

I found F. not quite so well, but I think it was only the influence of the (to him) melancholy weather — I, who must have some wild duck's blood in my veins (not a monkey's, I'm sure), am never depressed by rain, but quite the reverse. This morning when I went round to hospital, I found all the men drawn up in a double line, and thought Lord Kitchener must have dropped down upon us. But it was the young King Manuel of Portugal: and the Colonel immediately sent for me to be introduced to him. He was very civil and very simple, and looks almost a boy still. C. will tell you he is an awful person, but the real truth is that Portuguese anarchists conducted a villainous campaign of slander against him, and their horrible slanders were eagerly snapped up by the gossip-mongers. As a matter of fact, he was less than eighteen at the time he was supposed to be so "awful," and he had only been a King in any sense his own master for about a year

and five months. He has very far from a bad countenance: he is pale, like all Portuguese, and will be stout like his father, but he is not yet by any means fat. His manner is good and quiet, without pretensions or pose, simply like a well-bred, simple gentleman who does not want to "figure." He spoke to each of the wounded men, not "condescendingly" at all, but with a gentle, unassuming sympathy: and I noticed that they did not feel shy or embarrassed with him, as they would have done had he been patronizing. When he talked to them it was in a low voice to them only. When he smiles his face is very pleasant and kindly, and indeed I should say that kindness was the most noticeable trait in him.

. . . During such a war there should be no such names as Liberal and Conservative, it should be "Englishman" only: and he is a poor Englishman who helps foreign countries to believe that the English Government is rotten. The simple question every Englishman should ask himself is, "Whom does this agitation against our Rulers serve? If it tends to strengthen our enemy, and to ourselves, can it be English policy?"

Now I will dry up. . . .

Don't let —— "down" you with waggings of the head about poor King Manuel. He is the victim of a very mean and dastardly series of libels, which he had no means of disproving, since the anarchist press of Portugal was beyond the reach of *any*one.

Friday Morning, December 3, 1915

. . . I WROTE you a long letter the night before last to post yesterday, and to-day shall not be able to write you another long one, (1), because I have nothing to say — and (2), because I have not much time. This morning and yesterday morning began like Wednesday, fine, very warm, with a sort of clear darkness, and a

wonderful, indefinably sweet air: and both days turned to rain almost as soon as it was really light. To-day it is *pouring*, but still extraordinarily warm.

The alb arrived from Mary this morning; she was so stingy over brown paper that it got wet and grubby on the way. It is always hard to induce servants to use enough packing paper, and our house is crammed with it, kept precisely to be used on these occasions. Fortunately, the silk girdles were rolled up inside the alb and so they were not wet or injured. I daresay she thought that by using a very little paper she would save postage, but it only causes me to have to spend 1 franc 50 to get the alb washed, which it need not have been if it had not got dirty on the way.

I got one letter from you yesterday and to-day two letters, very chatty, cheery and pleasant and I thank you heartily for them. I send you a *New York Herald* with an excellent letter from Roosevelt.

To-morrow I am going to Paris to luncheon with the Marquise de Montebello and I know I shall enjoy it; she is so pleasant, such excellent company, and cheery and amusing. I shall go to one of the big shops and get you some more Christmas cards: there is no choice here at Versailles: and everything here costs more than in Paris. I must dry up, though the day won't hear of it.

Friday Night, December 3, 1915

. . . It is rather late, and the heavy, almost hot weather makes me feel sleepy, so I shall not write either a long or a brilliant letter, but I want to get one ready for to-morrow's mail. I go in to Paris early to-morrow, as Madame de Montebello's luncheon is at twelve, and from door to door (from mine to hers) takes over an hour, and I have several things to do first.

Your parcel containing the kettle-holder for me, and the *very* pretty gift for Miss Maria Pringle, came this

evening. I will send it on to her on Sunday, and I am sure she will be delighted: it is *really* pretty and artistic, and extremely well made; and, as made by you, she will value it much more.

The kettle-holder is just what I wanted, and will be very useful. The little razor pad is not nearly worn out yet, and will last for a long while still. I sent off the second volume of Lord Lyons to-day, and I hope it will interest you. As I have said before, it lacks the sort of entertaining chit-chat that is often the particular attraction of reminiscences, but it is exactly characteristic of the man — truthful, thorough, and giving an exact idea of the work and difficulties a great diplomatist has to do and struggle against. He did not know the meaning of intrigue, and he was a standing contradiction of the witty saying that a great diplomatist is a man who "lies abroad for the good of his country." He was the incarnation of discretion, and that is why there is so little tittle-tattle in the book. Lord Newton is the head of the very ancient family of Legh of Lyme Hall (they were not peers when you and I visited Lyme nearly, if not quite, fifty years ago). He earned his peerage by being a very good diplomatist himself.

Mrs. Wilfred Ward's short account of her great-uncle in private life is excellent; it was impossible to give an "intimate" picture of him, because even in private life he was not intimate; his shyness was more noticeable in private than in public, and I think he used it as a weapon against possible indiscretions of people who might think they knew him well enough to ask questions. She speaks of his extraordinary habit of talking sheer nonsense in private life — another trick to avoid the traps and pitfalls of "serious" conversations. As the book has to end with his death it leaves one rather tantalised as to the final occupation of Egypt by ourselves, and the good relations that grew up at last between us and France — after that occupation, which the French had

been so long fearing, had become a *fait accompli* that they had to make the best of. Lord Lyons was shrewdly alive to French faults, and especially to the faults of the French *politicians* (always the worst class in France) with whom he had most to do: and he was always the reverse of gushing and always utterly British. But it is evident that he liked France and the French all the same, and sincerely wished England and her nearest neighbour to pull together: also it is perfectly plain that he understood, as few English politicians did, how persistently Bismarck worked to breed bad blood between the English and the French: and that he fully understood why, mainly because he fathomed from the start the whole Prussian programme of universal mastery in Europe and the world.

Also Lord Lyons does justice to the Empress Eugénie and shows the injustice of the fable that the war of 1870 was forced by her.

On the whole the book is much better than amusing, a worthy monument to a simple and great man, of a sort that hardly exists now, whose whole idea was silent service and duty, efficiency, and the sinking of himself in the interests of England: he had no axe of his own to grind and was not out for his own name and fame.

After this long essay I will go to bed.

So good-night and may only happy dreams visit you.

Sunday, December 5, 1915

. . . I DARESAY you are getting my letters rather irregularly just now, and so, on some days, none. I have written each day, but the boats often do not cross now. To-day I had a double mail with two letters from you, written on Wednesday and Thursday. I will get the drinking chocolate and send it you to-morrow: I am so glad you like it: why not let Kearney make your cocoa of this only, and not use the Salisbury stuff at all: it is

quite cheap and I could easily send you two or three dozen of the small packets at a time; it comes from the French Colonies and they prepare everything so carefully and well.

Yesterday I went to luncheon with the Marquise de Montebello, and had a *very* nice time. We were six: herself, myself, her husband's eldest brother, the Duke de Montebello, and his younger brother the Count, her sister (Mrs. Hope Vere), and Madame Beyens, the wife of the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs: all interesting, clever people, and very pleasant indeed. The house is charming, too, and the luncheon was excellent. Mrs. Hope Vere wants to go to England, but though she has her passports, etc., she can't get across. They warn her that the boats are running very irregularly and often are not able to run at all, because the storms have *filled the Channel with drifting mines* that have broken loose and are wandering about vaguely. So you see that if I were going over I should have a certain amount of difficulty and now you need not picture me being sent to the bottom by a wandering mine. The Duke de Montebello is *very* nice, but he has just lost his wife, and he looks very sad. The Count is a great joker and excellent company. Of course one had heard plenty of M. Beyens, the Belgian Foreign Secretary, and I found his wife very interesting, cordial, and agreeable. She is young, about eight and twenty, I should say. It was quite *hot* yesterday and so it is to-day, but not a bit healthy.

I must dash off to hospital.

Monday Evening, December 6, 1915

. . . The weather is still the same — wild, windy, ever raining, and still warm. But to-day we had a mail, and I got your letter of Friday, not at all delayed.

I enclose now the stuff I bought you for putting on the pretty things you make: this sort of "galoon" adds a

wonderful finish and cachet to them. I also enclose eighteen more Christmas cards for you to send off to whomsoever you will: some rather pretty, but nothing wonderful: the truth is there was not much choice even in Paris, for the Christmas card custom has not, I suppose, caught on here very much. Even in the enormous "Louvre," where there were thousands of people buying things, there was no large assortment of Christmas cards (of picture post-cards, millions). Also I send the various short lengths of passementerie meant to make belts of, or to trim hats or to trim evening gowns. I have put the names of the people I meant them for, but if you think well these names may be shuffled. I told you I was reading another Ambassador's life (Sir Robert Morier's), but I don't think I shall send it on to you: it is instructive, but he was a specialist on Germany and the book is stuffed with regular essays on German politics and developments, and it wants a *very* detached mind to be able to enter into that just now: *I* can't enter into it sympathetically. It is true that Morier loathed Bismarck and was loathed by him, and that Morier hated the Bismarckian policy of iron and blood: but he was hand in glove with Baron Stockmar and the Prince Consort, and earnestly desired the unification of Germany (out of the hotch-potch of independent States of which it consisted before 1870 and the Franco-Prussian war); he hated Napoleon III and was, above all things, eager to keep England apart from France. Whereas it was the policy of Russia to prevent German unification, as Russia all along had the sense to see that a militant German Empire would be the greatest menace to Europe, and that a Germany united under Prussian emperors, would inevitably be militant. Our desire to see France terrorised by a very strong German neighbour, was, as I have thought since boyhood (since 1870), our terrible mistake, and it is the mistake we are paying for now. Thus, it seems to me, all the while I am reading of Morier's

energetic efforts to make England sympathise with and help the efforts for German unity, that he was simply mistaken and that we ought to have been helping France and Russia instead. The other states of Germany, except Baden, by no means wanted to range themselves under Prussia: and as long as they remained separate and half of them looked to Austria as their chieftain, there was no chance of a European menace from Germany. But Morier was besotted with the idea that the Germans and English were cousins, and should be dear friends, and for that friendship he worked tooth and nail. Queen Victoria herself was much less Germanophile than Morier, and it was from him she received instruction as to Germany and its politics. So far as I have got (before 1870) it does not seem to occur to him that in Germany was to arise the implacable rival of England. It is fair to say that even already I can see how he hated and feared Bismarck; and how he built everything on the chance of what would happen when the Crown Prince (the Emperor Frederick) should succeed: whereas the Emperor Frederick only assumed the crown to die, and his son, the present Emperor, was a worse Bismarck than B. himself. I thought that lurid article on his madness would interest you. His son, the Crown Prince, is still madder, and a hopeless degenerate.

Now I must stop and pack up my parcel.

Thursday Evening, December 9, 1915

. . . This morning I received your two letters, one of which enclosed a letter for Miss Maria Pringle that I posted at once: she will receive it to-morrow. Also I received the parcel containing the foot-warmer, which is splendid, just what I shall find delightfully comfortable when this spell of warm wet weather is past.

I fired off the Joan of Arc to Winifred Gater, and a large bottle of eau de cologne to Mrs. Gater. I duly

received the eighteen mortuary cards a few days ago and have started saying the Masses. F. came this morning and I took him to luncheon at the Hôtel des Reservoirs: it joins the château and is a palace itself, the quasiroyal abode of Madame de Pompadour, with her arms still on the front of it, carved in stone. It stands in such a striking position, and in such an intimate neighbourhood to the château that it seems to *challenge* remark and comment. To have had, as Madame du Barry had afterwards, her own suite of apartments *in* the château would have been far less challenging to public comment. The interior is fine, and the rooms quite palatial. While we were at luncheon I said to F., "There is a party of ladies in the corner there whom I can't quite make out: one looks quite a lady, the other four very 'ordinary' and I'm wondering if they are English." A few minutes afterwards one of the ladies got up and came over to me saying, "The Duchess of Vendôme hopes you will come and talk to her as soon as you have finished your luncheon." We went to her table and she was most friendly; made me sit down, offered us coffee and cigarettes, and kept us talking for over a quarter of an hour. She is tall, fair, with blue eyes, light hair and a very aquiline nose, rather like her brother, King Albert. She has small and pretty hands, and her manners are very simple and nice (not nearly so royal as our own royalties). She seems an excellent woman, much given to good works. I don't know the names of any of her ladies. Then we went (in the rain) to look at the Salle de Menus Plaisirs where the National Assembly sat which inaugurated the Revolution.

Finally I splashed home through the wind and rain and that is the end of my day's doings. I am always delighted if I have anything to put into a letter, and I daresay the Princess would be surprised if she knew that all the time I was saying to myself, "You'll go well into my letter to-night."

Monday, December 13, 1915

. . . I HAVE been toiling through letters till I'm dizzy; and now I am too stupid and too hurried to write you more than a "bulletin."

It is now *bitterly* cold again, and I am taking *great* comfort out of the foot-muff, as Wilcox calls it, which you made me. I had not intended to begin using it till Christmas; but perhaps it will be ever so warm then, and it is certainly cold enough now. So I thought it more sensible to take advantage of it. You could not have made or bought me anything which would have given me so many hours of comfort. Last Christmas you gave me a pair of wool-lined gloves (I'm wearing them now, every day) and I should like a new pair for *New Year's Day* but not before.

I had a nice letter from Bessie in which she says *your* courage and cheerfulness make her ashamed. I do think you are splendid and it just prevents my heart breaking.

Yesterday our mail only came in about two in the afternoon and to-day it has not come in at all: not yet, at least.

Your letter dated Saturday came yesterday, acknowledging my parcel of parcels. I'm so glad you think the gold galoon pretty — *I* did!

F., after lunching with the Duke and Duchess of Trévise, came here, and was very nice: then we sallied forth to give tea to Lady Austin-Lee. F. and I are lunching with her on Saturday. She evidently likes her little tea-parties with us, and certainly we *owe* her them.

Monday Night, December 13, 1915

. . . I TOLD you we had no mails this morning, but one cropped up to-night. It brought your letter of Friday saying you had heard of Mary's safe arrival at Hereford. I think Hill is a good sort.

F. came after luncheon to-day and we went to tea with *his* nuns, *i.e.* those who "soigner" his hospital: they are very nice, and simple, warm-hearted creatures, like Irish nuns. There were some other nuns there of another Order, who had just arrived, after twenty-four years in Turkey, whence they have been kicked out. They looked rather cowed, and as if they had seen ghosts: but gentle, amiable creatures. Anyway, they're in uncommonly good quarters now. I met a young soldier (French) yesterday who was reported dead for eight months. He said, "After being dead officially for so long it was rather hard to persuade the authorities I was 'alive.'" "We shall have to inform your parents," they said. "Oh, they won't mind: I've been corresponding with them since three days after I was wounded."

Wednesday Night, December 15, 1915

. . . I HAD your letter of Sunday last this *evening* and I am glad to hear poor Mary got safe back to you. Her long journey in such weather could have been no catch. Also I am glad you liked the things I sent for you to see and send on.

I went to call on the Marquise de Montebello to-day but she was out, and I found a letter from her when I got back, saying she is coming on Friday and wants me to give her tea. F. takes very kindly to our English tea and makes a square meal of it.

I enclose another letter from D. R., with some very odd spelling mistakes; he "new" Aunt Matilda, who lived "alonside" him. Grandpapa's testimonial would have been rather inflated for the Admirable Crichton. No wonder he (the doctor) thinks highly of his judgment, etc.

I sent Christie the "classeur," as they call the thing for letter paper. If I see any other pretty thing for her I will send it, as she does not want the black lace veil.

Miss Stewart in her letter told me this yarn: Two men went into a restaurant:

Mr. A.: I want Turkey — without Greece.
Waitress: O dear! I suppose you're Germany?
Mr. A. No, I'm only Hungary.
Mr. B. Don't Russia (rush her) or she won't Servia. (serve yer).
Mr. A.: If she won't I shan't Roumania (remain 'ere).

It is now Thursday morning (I don't mean to imply that I've been writing all night) and a very disagreeable, slushy, dirty-looking morning, too. I've seen more weather at Versailles than during all the rest of my life, I think.

I am sorry this is such a rotten letter, but I have nothing to tell you except that I wish I could come and give you a little hug and see how you were looking.

I was quite defeated by the life of Sir Robert Morier and really had to give it up. He belauds and glorifies the Germans chapter after chapter, and spends his life working for an alliance between us and Prussia, and I can only regret that he succeeded even to the extent he did: and his raptures at the defeat of France by Prussia in 1870 are very little to my taste, as you can imagine.

I must dry up, so with best love to Christie.

Saturday Evening, December 18, 1915

. . . To-day I had your dear little letter of Wednesday and one from Christie too, full of affection. Mrs. Gater wrote and announced the dispatch of a brace of pheasants: they also have not yet arrived — if the post office delays them very long I should think they would get out and walk and arrive in a long procession! It was very good of her to send so nice a present, and pheasants will be a treat. One never sees game here, even in the shops.

Though the manor house plum pudding has not yet cropped up, *a* plum pudding has arrived from the Prioress of the Atherstone Benedictine nuns; whose name in the world was Drew. It is a chumping big one, and even Wilcox could not eat it at one go. Bessie sent to-day two very nice silk handkerchiefs, but they do not clash with Christie's, for hers are white and these are khaki-green, so now I am at liberty to have a cold in my head.

This morning F. and I went to luncheon with the Austin-Lees and they were both *most* amiable. F. finds his god-mamma more and more trying at close quarters, and she is evidently not in the sweetest of tempers. She lectures him on manners and social ways, of which she knows no more than a kangaroo. I believe if they go on together much longer they will come to blows! She is sugary outside, but so are pills.

Sunday

I have just received two very nice silk handkerchiefs from Alice and a very affectionate letter with them. I also received your cheery little letter of Thursday. But I must dry up and can write no more till this evening.

Wednesday Morning, December 22, 1915

. . . I BEGIN with wishing you a Happy Christmas, for this letter can't reach you before Christmas Eve, and perhaps will only reach you on Christmas Day. So I *do* wish it you: that we cannot be together is the great blot on our Christmas, but it is not our fault, and as it is a sacrifice to duty it ought to bring a recompense and blessing. I confess that *I* shall be ten times lighter-hearted when Christmas is past, and especially when 1916 has arrived.

To-day is a day of ghastly weather; through a sky like skim milk and warm water, a drizzling rain oozes down.

It is muggy, warm, mild, and reeky; the walls are sweating like Malta in a sirocco — I don't mean the walls of *my* rooms, for a good fire keeps them dry. It is so dark in the chapel of the convent while I say Mass that my eyes get quite strained reading — though they have gas lighting, it seems as if the rain got into the gas-pipes. Yesterday was just the same, and though Lady Austin-Lee and Marquise de Montebello were engaged to come to tea with F. and me I did not expect them to turn up: however, they did, and it was very good fun. I must say that I think it was very nice of them to come all the way from Paris, in pouring rain, for a cup of tea in a tea-shop. No mail has arrived from England to-day — as yet, at all events — and I am trembling for the fate of the Gaterian pheasants.

. . . For the last hour and a half I have been writing letters in French to a number of rather neglected correspondents, who have all reminded me of their existence by writing to me very kindly letters, full of Christmas wishes.

If I spent the whole twenty-four hours of each day letter-writing I could not do more than keep abreast of my enormous correspondence, and you know how far I am from being able to do this, so that I never *can* keep abreast of it.

I can write in French quite as quickly as in English, and perhaps nearly as correctly. In English, I fear, my spelling is rather running to seed, because so many words are nearly the same in both languages, but in one with two f's or l's or s's and in the other with only one.

Talking French is very different and I cannot talk it nearly so quickly as English nor *nearly* so correctly.

Christmas Eve, 1915

. . . I WISH I was able to go and sit by your side and tell you how happy a day I wish to-morrow may be for you. As it is I can only pray for you, and ask Our Lord Himself to be close to you.

By the time you get this, which will be Monday or Tuesday, Christmas Day will have passed, and I confess I shall be glad. I don't think you quite understand my feeling, and perhaps I cannot explain it very intelligently: but it comes from the contrast between the sense that Christmas should be a time of such immense joy, and the unutterable suffering in which all Europe lies bleeding. To simply *ignore* all that pain and anguish is beyond me and so there is a sort of horror in the background of any Christmas thought I try to house in my mind.

I have suddenly developed another abscess at the root of one of my teeth. It is very worrying and painful, and has made the cheek swell and I cannot bite even bread. I was to have gone to a concert for the patients this afternoon, but my face is too swollen to display in public. The Gaterian pheasants have still not turned up and I now look forward to their arrival with dread!

F. and I went to Madame de Montebello's Christmas Tree yesterday and I think he expected it to be quite exciting, and it certainly was *not!* I don't think a French Christmas tree is half so jolly as an English one. The tree, very pretty, was cocked up on a stage and the hall was entirely filled with chairs on which the guests sat as if for a concert. So there was no moving about and chatting. There were songs, and finally each soldier received one prize duly numbered — all very proper and dull. Then F. and I went to do some shopping, and I bought a souvenir for Mrs. Kearney and another for Bert: and I also bought some bits of stuff for wristbands, collar, etc., for you, which I put in a general parcel containing things for Bert, Mary, and Kearney.

Christmas Day

. . . THOUGH the abscess in my jaw is not gone nor the outward swelling disappeared, both are distinctly better, and I am by no means in the extreme discomfort of yesterday morning and Thursday night. I slept well last night, whereas the previous night I did not sleep at all.

It is what is called an open Christmas, mild, soft, warm, *quite* warm, but dark and still, with a sort of brooding quietness. I said my three Masses all in a row at the hospital, beginning at 7.30.

Our post has not come in yet: it was sure to be late on Christmas Day.

F. came round to see me yesterday and had tea; he gave me a very pretty little card-case with the Count's coronet on it in silver. Two Pringles sent me a pretty match-box to wear on the chain, made of Spanish black and gold inlay work — really charming.

As I am better I shall go and lunch with the Austin-Lees and give F. dinner in the evening at the Hôtel Edouard VII. Wilcox is dining with friends, and it would be a little gloomy all alone in this Spy House! (Not that I really think so. It was my idea if I were not better to go to bed about two in the afternoon and read there in great comfort.)

I hope that you received my humble offerings this morning and that they will have amused and interested you.

And I hope *very, very* earnestly that this day may pass not uncheerfully with you, and that you may have happy thoughts for company.

Don't be discouraged because public men like Asquith talk of the war lasting two years more — all that is said to make Germany understand that the Allies are *ready* to fight on and so to make her collapse the sooner. The more she thinks the Allies are ready for a *twenty years'*

War if necessary the less heart will she have to go on: for she knows she cannot face a long war. Her men are nearly used up and her money is all gone.

I must stop now. God bless you, dearest darling, to-day and all days, and send you three hundred and sixty-six happy days in 1916.

Ever, with best love to Christie.

Hôtel Edouard VII, Paris
Christmas Day Evening, 6.20 P.M.

. . . I AM giving F. dinner here to-night, and he has not yet turned up, so I am beginning a letter to you, though I daresay I shall not get very far with it.

I wrote you a scrubby letter just before leaving Versailles this morning, and then was off to catch the train. I was rather lucky, for though it poured in torrents while I was in the train, it was only *trying* to rain as I went to the station, and had given up trying as I walked from the Invalides Station here to the Austin-Lees. Then again it poured in tropical torrents while we were at luncheon and grew beautifully fine and bright just as I left. The party consisted of themselves, myself, a pretty little Miss Wood, who does something at the Embassy, and a young Mr. Gwynnes, I think: I know it isn't either Grimm or Gwynn: Irish, of good family, and a grandson of Lord Fitzgerald — and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. I have met him there before: and never mastered his name.

Lady Austin-Lee was delighted with a tiny Venetian glass vase I found for her Christmas present at Versailles, I got another for Madame de Montebello and a third for the Duchess of Wellington; they are *real* Venice glass, of exquisite colour. She had tons of glorious flowers from various friends; her drawing-room was crammed with them.

She was *very* amiable and invited me to luncheon again

on Wednesday to meet our friend Vicomtesse D'Osmoy (pronounced "Daumois"), who is coming up from her château for two or three days. I am also lunching with the Austin-Lees on the following Wednesday. Are they not hospitable?

On Monday I am lunching with Madame de Montebello, and giving tea here, to Lady Austin-Lee and Mme. D'Osmoy. Here is F. very ready for dinner, so I must dry up.

. . . When I got back from Paris last night I found my table covered with letters — two days' mails. Two from you, one from Helen, one from Lady Glenconner one from Lord G., both very affectionate and friendly, and a dozen others: also a stack of parcels:

1. The PHEASANTS high but not impossible.
2. A plum-pudding from the Darlington nuns.
3. A box of Bayonne sweetmeats from Maria Pringle.
4. A box of *excellent* chocolates made by herself from Dora Hardy.
5. A large and excellent plum-cake from the same, about five pounds weight!
6. A box of cigarettes from Helen.
7. A Calendar and Engagement Tablets from young Prideaux of Lichfield School.

All these Mr. Wilcox had had to carry round from hospital under his arm! It took me till midnight to read my letters: and then I went to bed.

Tuesday, December 28, 1915

. . . No mails yet to-day, but one expected in the course of the day. Meanwhile I have only time to say "how do you do?" as, being away so long yesterday, I must go early to hospital and get through some work.

Yesterday I lunched with Madame de Montebello; her cook is a genius, and the company was charming:

besides ourselves the Duke (of Montebello) and a Count and Countess and Mademoiselle de Cernay — all *really* nice people, "top hole"!

I enclose a very nice letter from the Duchess de San Carlos, who, as you see, is a great admirer of my books. I do not want her letter back. I had a nice letter from Helen to-day — rather hard to read! thanking me for my Christmas gifts. Also I had your own letter of Monday and an excellent one from Mary, thanking me for *her* presents. She really writes a first-rate letter, full of devotion to you, and of *heart*. She speaks so heartily and nicely of her wish for my return, and her regret for your having to be so long without me. I like her way of speaking of it —worth a hundred stilted phrases.

. . . It is quite true, Colonel S. is off to-night — to be A.D.M.S. to the 27th Division and our "unit" moves to Boulogne in February. Of course I regret leaving my very kind friends in Paris, but I am glad otherwise: I have had enough of Versailles, and Boulogne is so very near England. Possibly, too, the move may make the further move to England a little easier.

We are to have a fine Jesuit College outside the town, on high ground, where there is good air and drainage — and where England can be seen!

. . . I only wrote so far and then stopped. I had had to write a lot of other letters, intending to write yours last when the others should have been polished off, but I suddenly felt too tired to write more and had a sort of palpitation. The queer muggy weather before Christmas didn't suit me (it was heavy and hot) and my liver suffered. And also some stuff one of our doctors gave me for a cough has upset my stomach, rather. We have not yet received our English mail and I had none yesterday: so I do not yet know how you got through Christmas.

Yesterday afternoon I gave tea (always at my little

"Ceylon Tea Rooms") to Lady Austin-Lee, Vicomtesse d'Osmoy, and F. The last still in the grip, the other two *very* amiable and nice.

I am going to luncheon with Lady Austin-Lee tomorrow, where Madame d'Osmoy will be again, and also a Miss Tennyson, niece or great-niece of the poet, who writes a lot and is an industrious reader of John Ayscough.

I am getting very anxious about ——. He has been so amiable lately to me that I find it hard not to say, "Take care, you'll overstrain yourself."

I have just received a New Year's visit of compliment from the Mother Superior of the Auxiliatrices (the nuns at whose convent I say Mass daily) and one of the Sisters. I was very busy and wished them at Jericho, but they were cordial and pleasant. I presented them with a magnificent box of Spanish sweets just received from Susan Pringle: and they seemed quite enchanted with them, though I have no doubt they will only give them away again. The Reverend Mother is a clever, very capable woman, who was a Mademoiselle de Samalé, one of the most aristocratic of French names. The convent, with its beautiful park, was her inheritance and she (having no brothers) became a nun, and changed her old home into a convent: her mother lives in a nice house just outside the convent boundaries. Vicomtesse de Samalé is a dear old lady (eighty-two) and comes to my Mass every day. She and the nuns are always praying for you. I must stop now. So with best love to Christie and every good wish for your Happy New Year.

III

New Year's Day, 10 A.M., *January* 1, 1916

THOUGH I wrote you a very long letter last night — the last letter I wrote in 1915 — which has not yet left Versailles, I must first write a few words to wish you every blessing and every happiness in the new-born Year, so that my first letter of 1916 may be to you.

Please wish Christie all possible good luck from me, too.

Saturday Evening, 6 P.M., *January* 1, 1916

I HAVE just come in after Benediction, before which I had been giving Lady Austin-Lee tea in the usual tea-rooms of the Rue Hoche. Someone had told *her* that our move to Boulogne is coming off sooner than I was told the day before yesterday: if her informant is correct we shall move there in about a fortnight. I shall not be sorry to go earlier than I expected so much nearer England. It will make no difference to the addressing of your letters to me, as the address will still be No. 4 General Hospital, British Expeditionary Force.

At seven o'clock we (*i.e.*, all the officers) are giving a dinner party at the Hôtel de France here, to the nursing staff: and I shall then be able to find out if Lady Austin-Lee was right about our move being so soon.

She, Lady Austin-Lee, will miss our hospital; twice every week for fourteen months she has visited it, and the work has interested her very much. She spoke *most* regretfully of how much she will miss *me:* and I think she really will. I certainly shall also miss *her* and all her very kind hospitality.

Still I can't help looking upon the move to Boulogne as a very long stride on the way home. *No* place in France is nearer England than Boulogne — Calais, perhaps?

To-day, New Year's Day, is the great day for calling in France, and I have paid duty visits to Madame Muttin, in; Madame Galloo Feron, out; the Bishop of Versailles, in; the Huntington family, in, but not visible — it seems that Mrs. H.'s son-in-law, Mr. Wilson, died the night before last: he has been very ill a long time. I had not met him, though I knew his wife.

Madame M—— amused me by begging me to apologise to Lady Austin-Lee, Madame de Montebello, and the Pringles for not having called upon them — she being in mourning (her last husband only died ten years ago!).

F. telegraphed to tell me he had arrived safely after a good journey, and the telegram arrived just as I was going to bed last night: it rather frightened me for a moment (for I have received hardly any telegrams here), as I dreaded lest it might be to say you were ill.

New Year's Day has been slushy and dismal here: rather sad for all the holiday-makers. I must get ready to go out to my dinner-party: I sincerely hope I shall not have to make a speech!

May this year bring you all happiness, and may it see you at its end in as good health as now, and while it is still young may it see us together in our quiet home.

Wednesday, January 5, 1916

I HAD no English mail yesterday, but your letter of Sunday has just come. You seem to think I shall not like going to Boulogne, but I *do*. It has always been "on my chest" how far from you Versailles is, and no place in France is so near to you, or so accessible, as Boulogne. Whenever I do get home you need not fear my finding it dull: the less society, the more and the

better I can write: I would *fifty times rather* be sitting at my writing-table working than sitting in a drawing-room hearing society people talk. It is true that we have very few neighbours, but it is my *home* I care for, not neighbours.

I have to go in to Paris early, as I am lunching with Lady Austin-Lee at twelve (it takes quite an hour and a half to get from door to door). We lunch early to suit Abbé Dimnet, who is coming in from the country on purpose to meet J. A.

I really must dash off or I shall miss the only train that will get me in in time.

With best love to Christie.

Very many thanks for the specially pretty little card of New Year wishes.

Epiphany Day, Thursday, January 6, 1916

It is an Ai wet day! Being Epiphany I said my Mass at the hospital instead of at the convent, and on the way back the rain was so fierce that I got quite wet — in twelve minutes or so. However, it is not like being at the front: I came in, changed into dry clothes, and put the wet ones to the fire to dry.

Then I had breakfast, then sat by the same fire reading your letter written on New Year's Day.

Yesterday I lunched with the Austin-Lees, and stayed a long time. The only other guest was Abbé Dimnet, the writer, a very nice as well as clever man. He is forty-nine and looks about thirty-two, and he is very cheerful and bright, though he has plenty to make him depressed: he comes from the north (of France, I mean) and the Germans not only occupy his town, but they have taken everything he possessed, his money, clothes, books, furniture, *every*thing. He and his mother escaped with a small hand-bag between them, but the German scouts took that also, and almost all his family are

prisoners. After Sir Henry had gone back to his work at the Embassy, and Abbé Dimnet had gone, too, I stayed on nearly two hours chatting.

Looking up from my writing I just saw a sea-gull in the garden, a rare sight here: Paris is very far from the sea, and at Versailles we are four miles from the Seine.

. . . I have *no* patients in hospital; there are only twenty patients altogether, as we are in the thick of packing up. Lots of doctors and nurses are gone on leave, and of course it would be a good opportunity for me to go: but I think it much safer *to stick where I am:* I want to go to Boulogne with the unit, and feel sure that it will be much easier to get home altogether then: whereas if I applied for leave they would very likely send me to some other place altogether, far from the coast, and, beginning again there (at perhaps Marseilles), they would not let me go again soon.

Sir Henry Austin-Lee was telling me yesterday of some "neutral" friend of his who had just come from Berlin, where he also was this time last year. He said everything is so changed: the Germans were then cock-a-whoop, now in the deepest depression; a universal gloom everywhere, and in all the towns, except Berlin, downright want and famine: everybody with only one thought — to end the war.

You seem to be having as bad (though certainly not worse) weather with you as we are getting here. How ghastly it must be in the trenches! Are you not glad I am not now at the front? I must set the weather a good example and dry up.

Thursday Evening, January 6, 1916

Just now Wilcox came in and brought me a sort of supplementary mail; for one came this morning; a letter wishing me a Happy New Year from the Duchess of Wellington: a parcel containing a present of envelopes

from the two Agneses: and your own letter of Monday — the one this morning was dated New Year's Day — last Saturday. The Duchess of Wellington says her husband, Colonel Wellesley, is exactly of my opinion that the German collapse is nearer than most people fancy.

I must tell you that the instant the Gaterian pheasants arrived I carted them into Paris, and gave one to the Austin-Lees and one to Madame de Montebello. Wilcox could neither have plucked nor trussed them, and as it was *I ate them* beautifully cooked! And my friends were delighted, as no shooting, except of Germans, is allowed in France during the War. Madame de Montebello served hers cold, surrounded with pâté de foie gras, and it was scrumptious. She is, as I told you, at present at Biarritz: that was the day before she started.

The Marquesa de San Carlos de Pedroso, whose letter I sent you (she is not the Duchess, that is her husband's sister-in-law) sent me a very pretty book of lyrics in Spanish, illuminated, in a vellum cover.

Yes, Cardinal Merry del Val is Spanish — at least half so. His father was Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See, his mother was half French, half English, and he speaks four languages as if they were his mother tongue, English (for he was educated in England), Spanish, French, and Italian. When he was Secretary of State to the late Pope, he was always very civil and kind to me.

After Mass yesterday the Reverend Mother's mother, Vicomtesse de Samalé, came to thank me for a little New Year's gift I had sent her. She is a *dear* old lady, of eighty-two, very pretty, and with sweet, gracious, old-lady manners. We talked much of you, and she says she is often praying for you.

She is terribly grieved at all our soldiers leaving Versailles, and says, "I do love them" and then, with a funny little face, "Before the war I couldn't bear them!"

Of course I laughed, and she said, "That comes of not knowing people. We had never seen the good English then, and only had an old tradition of their enmity to us."

The little present I gave pleased her so much. It was a *very* little vase of real Venetian glass I had picked up, of brilliant and exquisite colours, laced with gold. I found four, all different, and all four have been immensely appreciated. One I gave to the Marquise de Montebello, one I gave to Lady Austin-Lee, one I gave to Madame de Samalê, and the fourth I sent to the Duchess of Wellington; it arrived quite safely, and she thinks it lovely — as it was! I showed them to ——, but he had not enough taste in such things to admire them, or to know how *good* they were. . . .

What matches all those Tennants make! The fact is they are all very good-looking and all clever. . . . Lord Glenconner's own children are naturally both clever and handsome, for he is a handsome and clever man, and they have also the Wyndham beauty and extraordinary cleverness and brilliancy to draw upon. The only Wyndham I ever met who was less than brilliant was poor young Percy, who was killed at the beginning of this war, and *he* was wonderfully handsome. Lady Glenconner's parents were *both* brilliantly clever and singularly good-looking. Old Mrs. Percy Wyndham inherited the good looks of her grandmother "Pamela" (Lady Edward Fitzgerald, daughter of the Duc d'Orléans, or else not, as the Scotch say.)

Saturday, January 8, 1916

My last two letters have been long, so you must not mind if this is a short one.

The latest news I have heard about our move is that we leave here on Monday week, or Tuesday week, *i.e.*, the seventeenth or eighteenth.

And further that we do not go to Boulogne itself, but

to a place called Dannes-Camier, near Boulogne: which being *quite* in the country, fifteen or eighteen miles from B., is supposed to be more suitable for a hospital. It is on the sea and very healthy, whereas B. is supposed to be rather *drainy*, *i.e.*, *undrainedy*.

. . . I like the idea of this quiet, secluded spot on the sea, and do not regret not going to B. itself. I have been there several times and have seen all there is to be seen.

I overslept this morning, and instead of getting up at 5.30 only got up at 7.15. So I am behind-hand with everything.

This afternoon I am to give tea to Lady Austin-Lee.

I am feeling better: just before and after Christmas I was out of sorts: the truth is that that season always makes me melancholy: it is all wrong, I know, but it is so.

Tuesday, January 11, 1916

No letter from you by to-day's mail, but I think it is only a *half*-mail, for there were no letters from anyone in England, only newspapers and some letters from France: so very likely I shall have a letter from you later in the day.

Yesterday I was not well, and I stayed in bed all day. The malady I told you of is really bothering me and very painful. In bed I was very comfortable, but I got up at 5.30 to-day and said Mass as usual.

F. turned up yesterday, and came round here at once on arrival from home. He had been travelling the whole night and looked quite worn out: and, poor boy, he was terribly sad; he tried to speak of what he should lose by my going but could not, and could only cry. I do feel *very* much for him, for really there is no one here whom he cares for except me, and no one of his own sort whom he knows except the Duke and Duchess of Trévise, who are quite *new* friends. I fancy his visit home was very

dismal: his father kind, but sad and aloof, and his poor old grandmother dying and childish; quite cheerful and quite unconscious of her state, singing nursery songs, laughing much, and altogether in a state in which it pained him to see her, for he has always been devoted to her. He is sure he will never see her again, and he said it pained him so much that when he went to say good-bye, before going to the station, she would only laugh and sing. However, I think laughing imbecility rather less dismal than weeping imbecility.

I must now go round to hospital and dismantle my chapel there and pack up the things that are my own and send back those I borrowed nine months ago from the nuns. I am *glad* to go nearer to England, but the actual packing up is rather melancholy. I am *sure* I shall feel much more cheerful myself once the move is over and done. I daresay you can find the place we are going to on the map of France in the big green Atlas: *Dannes-Camier*, near *Etaples* (between Etaples and Boulogne). It will (I believe) prove to consist chiefly of a big hotel, turned into a hospital, with scarcely any town or village. However, we shall see.

Wilcox is really very philosophical: he loses a tremendous lot by going, but he takes it very resignedly, saying, "Well, I've *had* a grand time, and I shall always have it to look back on all my days. It couldn't last for always."

It really shows a good as well as a sensible mind to be so much more alive to *having had* many comforts than to the grievance of having them no longer.

I must stop now.

Wednesday, January 12, 1916

No mail to-day, and none yesterday! I hate these irregularities, because I always think that in the course of them some letters are lost altogether. But I have no doubt it is no one's fault (except the Germans') and

on the whole our war-post is wonderful, and an immense boon and comfort never known in any previous war.

The result of no mail yesterday or to-day is that I have *nothing*, literally nothing, to tell you; the hospital has discharged *all* its patients, and will take in no new ones till we are installed in our new quarters.

The sun is feebly trying to push his frosty nose through a curtain of clouds, and I must say I hope he will succeed: but he hasn't succeeded yet. I am going in to Paris to lunch with the Austin-Lees, and I think it will be my last trip there. It will be odd being out of reach of it. I have got to know it far better than I know London.

Lady Austin-Lee is *really* sorry at my departure. . . . Even the Pringles write in desolation from Biarritz, though I can't see that it can make much difference to them whether I am in Versailles or the Pas de Calais.

I am sending you a *New York Herald* — is not the cheek of the Austrian Government sublime? It seems that a party of Austrians interned in India are being sent back to Europe in a ship called the "Golconda," and the Austrian Foreign Office demands the most precise information as to the ship's appearance, date of sailing, etc., lest her submarines should torpedo it in mistake for an ordinary English ship with only English passengers! Now I must get ready for Paris.

January 13, 1916

Last evening, when I came in from Paris, I found two letters from you dated Saturday and Sunday, but to-day there is again no mail up to now. In one of the two letters received yesterday you announce the departure out of this life of poor old Togo.

Our days at Versailles are drawing rapidly to a close: this is Thursday and on Sunday morning we depart; in fact the advance party left yesterday.

I lunched with the Austin-Lees yesterday, *en petite comité*, only themselves, myself, and the Abbé Dimnet, of whom I told you last week. Lady Austin-Lee was quite depressed at its being my last visit, and Sir Henry was very cordial and nice.

We hear that the new place is very muddy; if so I shall send for my gum-boots again, but don't send them till I write and ask for them.

It is another of the sour dismal days we have had so many of, and really they depress me: my present malady is also depressing: the loss of blood, of course, weakens one, though I have plenty to spare! If I were at home I would try a week's complete rest in bed, but it is not possible here just as we are on the move. After walking even a little I am so much worse that I am sure a week's rest in bed would, on the contrary, do wonders: and when we get to Dannes-Camier perhaps I shall try it. The hospital won't be organised again for a week or two.

Friday, January 14, 1916

No mail again, to-day either! It came late yesterday, and perhaps will come late to-day, but it is a nuisance its being so irregular of late. It was your letter of Monday that I received yesterday afternoon, the letter in which you announce poor Togo's funeral. One thing which always strikes me about your letters during many months now, is the excellence, clearness, and firmness of the handwriting. Your writing is *younger* than it was seven years ago, distinctly so, both as to its vigorous firmness, and as to the shaping of the letters: there is not a shaky line or stroke in it; and one would say, now, it was the writing of a woman of forty: this was not so ten, or even six, years ago; and it was not so even at the beginning of the war. I do believe that God, to make up for all that you have had to lose since the war began, has given you a new lease of life.

You say the morning was fine and bright, and so is *this* morning here. There is plenty of sun, and a clear sky, though it is cold.

To-day I read a very interesting short book (about sixty-five pages) by Balzac, called the "Curé of Tours," extraordinarily grim, bitterly clever, and morosely sad.

I must stop and go and finish the packing of the things at the "church" (I mean the little chapel in the hospital).

Friday Night, 7 P.M., *January* 14, 1916

On Sunday we push off: I don't know, no one knows, at what hour: nor, of course, do we know in the least when we reach our journey's end; but not, I suppose, till Monday morning. All trains go very slowly in France during the war; though we shall not have the worry of changing, even at Paris, as our train is for ourselves only; for ourselves, the officers, nurses, men, and all the enormous baggage of our enormous hospital, many hundreds of beds and their bedding, tables, cupboards, crockery, and all the medical and surgical equipment: besides the immense store of linen, hospital clothing, etc., scores and scores of tons of stores, cooking ranges, and a countless list of things.

You may be a day or two without letters from me: I can post this to-morrow (Saturday), but whether I can post another on Sunday, or one on Monday, I don't yet know, only too probably not.

You seem to think that at Dannes-Camier I shall be able to walk into the German lines — it would be rather a long walk. We are sixteen miles from Boulogne there, (on the side away from the front), and of course Boulogne is far behind St. Omer, which is itself a good way back from the front.

Nor am I likely even to walk in to the *sea!* because it is not like Dieppe, with high, precipitous cliffs, but a low

flat shore with sand-dunes, a sort of place where I shall like walking, and which fascinates me. It is only three miles from Etaples, where, I believe, there are decent shops, so I can still buy a boot-lace, or a piece of note-paper.

I am not well yet, but better to-day and suffering less.

The German Emperor seems to be dying. Wretched man: if he is really dying, what a miserable end, to die with all the world in anguish caused by himself, with the spectres of millions of slain men accusing him. Alas, an emperor even in death has so many flatterers! They will do their best to *prevent* his repentance: they will repeat the old lie of its being his enemies who forced the war on him. I can only pray that God may show him the stern and naked truth, so that his death may tend to end the miseries he has caused: I mean that he may not die *encouraging* those who will fill his vacant place, but warning them. If he should indeed die, how terribly it must affect that other emperor, himself so feeble, Francis Joseph of Austria! For a long time the younger, more forceful man, has been his evil genius, and he has all these months been reaping the whirlwind his tempter made him sow.

Of course the German Crown Prince is as war-like, or more so, than the present emperor, and the rest of the War Party will be as bellicose as ever: but the Crown Prince has none of his father's power, or force of character, or capacity for insisting on his will. *If* the Emperor dies, things in Germany will soon be at sixes and sevens: and the *people* will probably be no longer kept in order. All this calculation about a man's death is rather *macabre*, but it is inevitable.

I received the gloves yesterday, and they are uncommonly warm and comfortable, and will no doubt keep my hands nice and warm where we are going. Ever so many thanks, dear, for them.

I must dry up.

Monday, January 17, 1916

We left Versailles yesterday at two o'clock, and at one this morning, *i.e.*, in the middle of the night, arrived here. They did not drag us out of the train, but left us in peace in a siding till eight o'clock.

The journey was, of course, slowish: but quite comfortable. I had half a railway carriage to myself, *i.e.*, there were two officers to each carriage, so I had all one side to lie down on. About four o'clock we stopped in a siding, and the Sisters made tea and treated us all to it. At nine we stopped for half an hour at Amiens, and I got some dinner or supper. I slept quite well, though it was terribly cold.

This is a big camp consisting of several hospitals (field hospitals, only tents), situated in a queer sort of natural amphitheatre formed by a semi-circle of low clay hills, then the sand-dunes, then the sea.

(I have a diabolical pen and can hardly make it write.)

There are big Portland Cement works here and there, which do not improve the landscape. As soon as I arrived a mail was put into my hands, which was a very pleasant surprise, for usually after a change of quarters it is some time before one begins to get letters again.

Thursday, January 20, 1916

Strange to say the sun is shining, and it is cold and bright. Yesterday afternoon a violent wind arose and blew all night, so fiercely that I thought my tent would blow away to England. It flapped, and banged, and rattled, like an angry virago. And the rain smacked at it, and it was as wild as you like.

I got quite a fat mail at 4.30 in the afternoon, which is when the English post comes in. Wilcox has been invaluable, both on the journey and since I arrived. When I got here on Monday in the bitter cold there was not a

place for the sole of my foot to rest on and be dry, out of the universal mud. Wilcox bit by bit has rigged me up quite a little home in the following order: (1) a tent: at first this and three rugs were all my furniture and housing. And I had neither bed, bedstead, mattress, chair, table, basin, anything. (2) He found me two half mattresses so that I did not have to lie flat on the ground. (3) He found me on the third day an oil-stove which warms the tent thoroughly. (4) Last night he found me a camp bedstead, so that now I am raised from the ground. (5) He found me a bucket to wash in. (6) He got for me three blankets, so that I am very warm in bed now, and don't get chilled: before it was miserable.

I don't think I should dislike this place if I were well, but the truth is I can hardly walk at all, *cannot* walk at all without great pain, and the camp is scattered about: it is quite a long way to the "church tent," where I say Mass, and by the time I get there I am scarcely able to say Mass, because *every* movement hurts, especially genuflexion. And you see I am *not* keen to "go sick": because I don't want to be *invalided* home, but to obtain re-appointment to Salisbury Plain: if I were simply invalided home I should not be re-appointed anywhere. So you see I have to proceed very cautiously.

I am sending home some parcels of things addressed to "John Ayscough." They are all useless here, and only in my way: but tell Mary to *throw none of them away*, as she loves to do. There are some old clothes, boots, slippers, etc., really deserving throwing away, but I want them kept because I used them at the front.

One of the parcels to be opened contains a small brown paper parcel addressed to me in Italian, it comes from Rome, and contains some silk for making stocks with: so you can take possession of that.

I must stop now.

Thursday Evening, January 20, 1916

I WROTE to you this morning, and instead of writing again to-morrow morning, I am doing so now. It was sunshiny when I wrote, then it turned to sleet; it is now a cold bright moonlight, with a strong and very sharp wind: but quite fine, and the wind, I hope, will dry up some of our mud.

I wanted to buy some necessaries for my tent — an enamel washing-basin, tooth-mug, jug for water, etc., and went to Etaples to buy them. A young fellow called Considine took me in in a motor-car, and it took very little time that way. He is a gentleman, of good Catholic family, very lame and so unable to be a soldier, but he is out here with his car to make himself useful, and so help. There is an excellent huge hut here, run by some Catholic ladies, of the Catholic Women's League, as a sort of club for the men, and it is immensely appreciated. Mr. Considine helps them, and he had to go to Etaples to bring out the day's stock of cakes, buns, bread, etc., for the men.

The short drive in is pretty: on one side the downs, exactly like our Wiltshire downs, so like as to make me very homesick. Then a belt of low dunes covered with stunted Scotch-firs, then the open dunes, behind which is the sea.

Etaples is a spread-out sort of little town of endless mean streets, all slums, *no* good houses, and nothing old or picturesque: I suppose the inhabitants are fisher-folk.

I made my purchases, and then took shelter from the sleet in the small shop where Mr. Considine's cakes were being baked. There were the baker, his wife, and *two* mothers-in-law: his own and his wife's. And of course I talked to them all. They seemed much impressed by my French, whence I conclude that most of the English they have seen talk it very badly indeed. It was my first occasion of talking French since I came here, except

to a few wounded Canadians in the hospital. But I am reading plenty of it: especially the "Memorial de Ste Hélène" which is intensely interesting. It is the Journal of Count de Las Cases, who accompanied the Emperor to St. Helena, and was his Boswell. It notes down the Emperor's talk each day, and Napoleon talked very well, ranging in his subjects all over his life, his various campaigns, his domestic life, his imperial life and so on. I am never uncomfortable [1] when I have books to read, and am thankful I brought some here.

But also I get much more *talk* here than I used to get at Versailles. I told you that the officers whose mess we're using for meals are more "conversible" than our own lot, and they seem to *like* to talk about books, places, history, etc.

One of the most friendly, and most clever is a Jew called Green. His father was an English Jew, his mother an Italian, and he was brought up in Italy, and talks beautiful Italian.

There are some nice Scotsmen, Highlanders, and I generally get on well with Scotch people: there is a very rough Belfast man, with an appalling accent, who is, however, both friendly and intelligent. He himself is an Orangeman by birth and breeding, but he admires Mr. Redmond much more than he does Sir E. Carson. Of course all these people are doctors, and mostly *not* really army doctors, but volunteers serving during the war.

. . . There is one young *Indian* doctor, a native; not, I should say, of at all high caste, but very meek and inoffensive.

So you see we are rather a menagerie. So far as I have discovered none of them are Catholics, except Father Ryan, whom I am relieving, very nice and friendly. He knows heaps of people I know, especially

[1] At this time and for many weeks before, he was and had been very ill, suffering tortures of pain. [Ed.]

a whole lot of Galway folk whom I used to meet long ago when I stayed with the Redingtons at Kilcornan.

The Church of England chaplain, called Symons (or Simmons), is a man about thirty-three, a gentleman, and very amiable. He comes from Bristol and knows people I know there. I don't think I've much more to tell you, and it's rather clever of me to have found even so much: for, I think, if you were shot down among all these men, you would say they were all the same, and that one name would do for the lot.

The Colonel of this lot is called Hassard, an Irishman. He called out to me the first day "Hi! Come here!"and asked if I had not gone to India in the "Euphrates" in 1888; and I said, "Yes," and that I remembered him. He said, "No, you can't." "Oh, yes, I can; and you are one of the Hassards of whom there is a whole clan round Waterford and Kilkenny." He soon found I knew all about his people, and was convinced. Whereupon he gave a grunt; and there our intercourse began and ended.

I must shut up.

Friday Midday, January 21, 1916

I CAN only write you a very short note, because in a few minutes I am starting for Etaples, where I am going into the Officers' Hospital. I did not "*go* sick," but was sent sick: one of our Majors came into my tent and asked all about my malady, and then said, "We are going to send you to hospital to-day, and no doubt from there they will send you home." I tried not to go sick, but I am glad, now all is settled, that I am to have the rest. Of course I do not know *when* I shall be sent home, but certainly not before ten days or so.

You can address your next letter No. 4 General Hospital and Wilcox will bring it over: as soon as I know the correct hospital address there I will let you know. Major Rahilly said that he thinks it certain I shall be

sent home, and *very* unlikely that I shall be sent out again. I am very sorry for Wilcox, for he is truly devoted, and will miss me: of course an officer's servant has many little exemptions and privileges. But the poor fellow is only unfeignedly glad, for my sake, because he knows how out of sorts I have been.

The motor is there to take me to Etaples, so I must stop.

I cannot at all realize that probably I shall soon be in England: though not at once at *home*, as I should first go to some hospital there, and then be "boarded" *i.e.*, be examined by a board as to fitness for service out here.

I'm sorry I can't tell you anything more *definite*, but I cannot.

Liverpool Merchants' Hospital, B. E. F.
Friday Afternoon, about 3 o'clock, January 21, 1916

I WROTE to you about two and a half hours ago, just as I was leaving the camp at Dannes-Camier to come here: and I told you I would send you my new address as soon as I could.

At 1.15 a car drew up at my tent door and into it I got, with my baggage, and the ever-faithful Wilcox, who was determined to stick to me to the last moment to save me all possible trouble.

It is no distance in to Etaples and only took about a quarter of an hour. I was instantly allotted my bed (14 B. Ward) and then *I* instantly demanded a bath. It was the first of any sort for a long time, the first hot *lie-down bath* for ages. So I enjoyed it, I can tell you.

My bed is very comfortable, and the Sister in charge a very attentive, kindly person; but of course I have hardly exchanged half a dozen words with her yet.

There are about fifteen beds in the ward, and about ten of them are occupied. I don't know how many other wards there are. I have just been given a thump-

ing dose of castor oil in brandy, so strong of brandy I could hardly taste the oil.

I imagine this is called Liverpool Merchants' Hospital because the money for it is found by the merchant princes of Liverpool, but I don't know.

The address is as I put it at the head of this letter, *i.e.*, the name of the hospital and A. P. O. S 11. (S eleven). I don't know how long I shall be here. Perhaps two weeks, perhaps a good deal less. If they discover that I require an operation I may go to England for it: if they *cure* me here I don't know at all what they will do. So I hope they *won't!* I should certainly be glad to suffer less, but I would rather be *cured* at home.

I must stop. It is a great treat to be so *comfortable* and I can tell you I appreciate it.

With best love to Christie.

You can tell Christie or *any*one, that I am in hospital, and may very likely be sent home, but you don't know yet, nor do I; and that if I have to be operated, I *shall* be sent home certainly, before or after.

Friday Evening, 7.30 P.M.

Poor old Wilcox has just walked down from our camp at Dannes-Camier (four miles each way) to bring me down my mail. Poor man, he could only look at me like a devoted dog; he could not speak, his eyes were pouring down tears. I think he is quite broken-hearted at losing me, and he suffers the more for being so silent.[1]

The doctor has just examined me (the doctors here are *charming*) and he said, "What horrors of pain you must have suffered for weeks!" and it is true. He said, "Tons of *young* officers come down from the front, who have not suffered a hundredth part of what you must. . . ."

[1] He was fully aware of his master's dangerous condition. [Ed.]

To-morrow they are going to put me under an anaesthetic, and examine more fully.

The hospital is very comfortable, and I do appreciate it after Dannes-Camier. I am so glad to know that they are working away well at the well.

Christie writes in high feather and says Alice is coming to see her on Monday; and so I hope she will be well cheered up. There is no such person as "Lord de Courcy." The de Courcy title is Kinsale; and Lord Kinsale is premier Baron of Ireland, and has the odd privilege of being able to "remain covered" (keep his hat on) in the presence of the sovereign.

The man who came to Malta and dined with me and told flaring stories was Lord Muskerry, not de Courcy.

I hope you won't build *too much* on my getting home: I hope to, but it is all "in the lap of the gods," and the gods won't let on at once what they are going to do. I feel easier in mind and body since I came in to hospital. For weeks and weeks I knew I should be in hospital, and that lots of the patients I visited in our own hospital were not nearly so ill as I was myself, but I tried to "stick it" and did. The journey to Dannes-Camier was a trial, and the rough conditions there. Now it is all settled and I am comfortable in mind and body. The struggle is over, and it is *not* a defeat, as I did not "go sick," but was sent.

I will shut up.[1]

Monday, January 24, 1916

I HAVE had a very good night, and am doing very well. I had some food this morning, for the first time since Friday — I mean solid food, *i.e.*, an egg and a piece of

[1] Next morning Ayscough was "operated": he felt so nearly sure of dying that from daylight he was writing off farewell and business letters concerning his affairs, to be posted after his death. I have constantly heard him laugh at himself for this, and say, "So much for the value of presentiment." [Ed.]

toast. Before that only tea, and (yesterday night) custard. They seem to think I have picked up very promptly, for I don't really feel very weak. I *suffer* still, of course, and must till the wounds are healed, but I suffer less than I expected.

Still I can't sit up much and you must excuse this short scribble.

I received your letter of Thursday last night — Alice will be going to you to-day. I think it will do you good. . . .

Tuesday Morning, January 25, 1916

I CAN only write you a line or two to tell you I'm getting on all right. Yesterday I wrote too many notes and knocked myself up. I *am* getting on all right, but I suffer a good deal still, and I didn't have a very good night last night. Father Ryan came down from Dannes-Camier to see me yesterday morning, and one of the Sisters in the afternoon. Of course Wilcox came. His grief over my illness is quite pathetic. I had your letter written on Saturday last night. I can't write more because I am lying down: yesterday I sat up and tired myself out. With best love to Christie and Alice.

Wednesday, January 26, 1916

I HAD a *very* good night, and feel much more comfortable. Of course I still suffer a good bit, sometimes miserably, but they say that, after the first week, it will be *much* better. You must not mind my only writing these brief bulletins at present. It tires me sitting up and tires me writing. I hear nothing yet about my return, but then I am of course quite incapable of travelling yet, and there will be no talk of it till I *am* (capable). Wilcox comes every day, and is as devoted as ever. I will give him your note to-morrow. I slept the *whole night* last night.

The Director-General of Medical Services (Sir Arthur Sloggett) is coming round this morning and they are busy getting ready for him. I can't write more, it makes my back ache.

Thursday, January 27, 1916

YOUR letter of Monday *afternoon* arrived last night, Wednesday; I daresay if it had caught the early post at Winterbourne it would have arrived here on the following evening. I am getting on well, and had a *bath* this morning, the first since the operation. It was very nice, and nothing relieves the discomfort and pain more.

Yesterday I received enclosed from the Cardinal: you will see that it is very kind and cordial in tone, and I feel now sure that he will take up my case vigorously. The Bishop of Clifton, too, will keep on at it.

The Bishop's letter was written *before* he had heard from me from this place. Now he knows of my operation, etc.

No, you did not tell me before of Lady Glenconner's visit. . . .

Two officers that used to belong to my old unit at the front came to see me, and were very pleasant.

I must stop now. I hope Alice is livening you up. I am not feeling very weak, but the pain is often harassing still, and will be till the wounds of the operation are healed and the stitches come out.

Best love to Christie and Alice.

Friday, January 28, 1916

I AM tired and can write you but a word to say I'm doing well.

Last night I had an enormous mail — letters from you, Christie, Alice, the Bishop, his Secretary, W. Gater, the Cardinal, the Duchess of Wellington, Lord Glen-

conner, Marquise de Montebello, Lady Austin-Lee, F. Keating (*The Month*), and I am nearly worn out answering them. The actual writing does not fatigue me: it is the position in which I have to do it.

I can't conceive why Alice should not have slept as usual in my old room over the kitchen: and it worries me. I suppose you thought *I* might swoop down! But there will be no swooping. I am not likely to be out of *this* hospital for some little while: and should probably be then transferred to an English one till out of doctors' hands. You say, "Why not come home and let civilian doctors do it all?" I *don't* think! There is no point in being ill at one's own expense, when one falls ill in service.

Winifred said she found you so well, and so pretty, with a nice, healthy colour.

January 29, 1916

I HAD a good night, but am feeling "poorish" this morning. I suppose it must be so for a time: but I suffer so at times that I feel quite collapsed afterwards. I shall not write many letters this morning, but rest. I meant to have written to Christie and Alice, but am not quite up to it. Give them my love.

One of the volunteer nurses here is a Miss Bibby. Do you remember the name in Shropshire long ago? The Bibbys live near Baschurch (the home of the Jebbs of the School) at a place called Hardwicke Hall (not the Kynastons' Hardwicke, of course), and she used to hunt round Ellesmere and our neighbourhood. We have great talks and she is now eager to read "Gracechurch." She is very good to me and brings me all sorts of things.

The reason I changed to pencil in writing this letter is that the ink in the fountain pen I was using gave out.

I must stop.

Sunday, January 30, 1916

I FEEL better to-day than any day since the operation. And the doctor examined the place yesterday, and told the Sister after that I was *doing very well*, that it was healing well, and he was very well pleased with it. As I suffer a good deal still I was beginning to feel uneasy, wondering if it *was* all right: and so I am glad to hear this.[1]

It has turned very cold: and I'm glad not to be in that tent at Dannes-Camier.

Our mail comes in about six P.M. Last night there was none, and we were told the boat had put out but had to return to England owing to enemy craft.

Wilcox walks down each evening, and looks at me, (tearfully!) and goes away again. He looks so lonely, poor man.

Best love to C. and A.

Monday, January 31, 1916

IT is terribly cold; if I sit up in bed I get frozen. I shall therefore only write you a word to say I'm improving steadily, if not as quickly as I should like.

I had very nice letters from Mr. and W. Gater. Please thank them. Also excellent letters from Bert and Mary: I like their letters; there is no convention and filling out with phrases. Poor —— writes ever so lovingly, but simply clatters "the Lord" around my head like a set of castanets.

Of course I do not get up yet, but am always in bed, and while one is ill I think it the best place.

We seem to be always having a meal or meal-let.

7 A.M. *tea*	1 P.M. *luncheon*
8 A.M. *breakfast*	4 P.M. *tea*
11 A.M. *lunch*	7 P.M. *dinner*

I must stop. God bless you and with love to Christie.

[1] It had been uncertain whether the conditions were cancerous. [Ed.]

February 1, 1916

When I awoke this morning, after a very good night, I found a bundle of letters by my side which had arrived in the night, and among them your letter of Saturday.

It is *beastly* cold this morning, and sitting up I get my hands frozen. You know how cracked nurses and doctors are about open windows, and it is a hard black frost.

There is an "evacuation" this morning, *i.e.*, a lot of patients sent home, three out of ten officers in this ward gone. I wonder when my turn will come: but, as I told you, I would rather complete my cure here, where it costs me nothing: after that the sooner the better. I don't envy them *to-day*, for it will be a bitter cold journey.

Poor Mary and Bert seem so really delighted at the prospect of my getting home. I hope whenever you *do* see me walk in you won't be *sick at me* as you were at Mrs. Taylor!!

I must stop.

February 2, 1916

The "Major" (he is really a civilian doctor, a very eminent surgeon and specialist from Liverpool, who is serving here as a volunteer) has just examined me again, and he says it is getting on very well; there is, however, still inflammation, and the wounds are not yet healed up. I told him that I did not *want* to go home till I was at least *very nearly* cured, and he quite understood. He is *very* nice, and so is the Colonel-Commandant here . . . *very* kind and sympathetic. To-day's was my first chance of a good plain talk with the Major and as it all now rests with the doctors, I am very much relieved in my mind to have had it. I had been watching for the opportunity a long time.

Three of our officer-patients went out (to England) yesterday, but three more came in. They are all wounded but *not at the front!* One in a game of football, one in a motor-accident, one while doing gymnastics. Very dull, isn't it?

I suffer *very* little pain now, and am really enjoying the rest and comfort in hospital.

You speak of its being a "house," but it isn't. It is a collection of huts, built in Liverpool and sent out here all ready to put up.

I must dry up.

Thursday, February 3, 1916

I HAVE been longing to begin my letter for the last two hours (for it is nearly twelve o'clock, and at twelve o'clock our post goes out), but another officer has been sitting on my bed telling me all about British Guiana, and I thought he never would stop. It was quite interesting if I had not wanted to be writing. He was a planter out there and doing very well, but threw it all up and came home to Europe to fight England's enemies. I know now *all* about a planter's life in British Guiana — the sort of houses they live in, their pretty gardens, the snakes, alligators, "tigers" (*i.e.*, pumas), dances, niggers, natives, Indians (all different) and so on.

I told you this was a hut, but it is a very nice one: this ward about one hundred feet long and twenty broad, a good height, and very well built.

I must stop. I'm doing *very well.*

February 4, 1916

I HAVE just come back to bed after a trip to the bathroom; after the first week I began to have a bath each day, and it really does me more good than the fomentations used to do, as both doctors and nurses had the sense to recognise at once. I always feel much easier after it, though a little tired.

You will be glad to hear that I am *notably* better, better each day. Presently, in another day or two, they will let me up. Then the next stage will be transference to some hospital in England; and the next after that, I hope, a board which will allot me sick leave, so that I can go *home*.

Another man here had an operation for the same thing as I the day before yesterday, but in his case the trouble was slight, and he suffered scarcely anything either before or after the operation.

We have had English game several times — pheasant, and jolly good ones. The Liverpool people send us fresh eggs, vegetables, grapes, oranges, bananas, and all sorts of little luxuries. I must say it's very good of them. I keep my fruit to give to Wilcox, because he adores it and I don't: the rest I gobble up myself.

Miss Bibby makes us excellent sandwiches for tea. She is very good but I can see that she is tired out ("fed up," as the soldiers say). She has been nursing ever since the war started, and it's very hard work, especially the being *on your feet* for over twelve hours each day.

Saturday, February 5, 1916

It is a fortnight to-day since the operation, and I am almost quite well: at first I seemed to myself to make no progress at all, but for the last five days I have steadily improved daily.

The doctor (the Major) is going to examine me again this morning, and I believe I shall then be given my "ticket" for England. That is, a sort of label will be put up over my bed saying I am for the next lot who go over to England. One would probably remain here four or five days after that.

Whenever I do go I shall, as soon as I get to England, send you a telegram to let you know I am there: but you must not expect to *see* me for some time after that,

as I shall have to go first to some hospital for some short time.

I write *every* day to you: I did not even miss the day of the operation, but it seems to me that you get my letters very irregularly: I am so sorry.

With best love to Christie and Alice.

Sunday

POSTSCRIPT: The Major has just examined me again and I am to have my "ticket." That means I shall go over with the next convoy, possibly to-morrow, possibly Tuesday or Wednesday. So I don't think there is any use in your writing to me till you hear where I am — it will probably be London.

Monday, February 7, 1916

IT is pouring down in a fierce rattling deluge, and poor Wilcox arrived from Dannes-Camier in the thick of it — drenched. But it is the sort of passionate rain that doesn't last, and already there is a wild gleam shining through it, so I hope he will have it dry and warm to walk back.

You see I am still here; and here I may be for days, just as I may be off at any moment. You would not like that, would you? The uncertainty, I mean.

You cannot think how nice Colonel Peake and Major Littler-Jones are here, how kind and cordial: and the nurses, too.

Tuesday, February 8, 1916

I BELIEVE it was on this day last year (and at about this hour) that I received the War Office letter telling me that I was to come out here again at once, and it seems a great deal more than a year.

No convoy yet, so you see I am still here; however

I am in very good quarters, and as I am not *cured* yet, I might as well be in one hospital as another.

Friday is my birthday; by then I expect I *shall* be in London.

Yesterday afternoon I had a long visit from Captain McDonald, one of the officers of my own "unit" — No. 4 General Hospital. He stayed over two hours and had tea, and was very amiable. It seems they have received no patients yet since coming from Versailles.

I wish Alice could stay on till I get back: I should so much like to tell her the history of the last year.

Wednesday, February 9, 1916

You see I am still here; but I expect there will be a convoy very soon, and then I shall be off: one never knows long beforehand when there is to be a convoy. However, I have my things all ready.

Last night I had your letter written on Sunday and a lot of other letters same time: a very kind one from Lady Portsmouth. During the war they live almost entirely in London, or, she says, she would have gone over to see you.

It is very cold here to-day, but bright. Yesterday we had thunder, hail, black storms of rain, and wind. Wilcox said the sea was very rough, so I was not sorry that I was not crossing.

I hated writing the article in the *Month*, but I felt it a sort of duty; English people *never* realise what France suffers from the war.

I have been nearly three weeks in this bed — three weeks the day after to-morrow, and now I sometimes get the fidgets, just as you do. All the same it is far more comfortable in bed than hanging about in the draughts of the ward. Miss Bibby is off duty with a bad cold, and it's a judgment on her for her passion for opening windows in all directions.

I must stop. I've a pain in "*me*" back from sitting up in rather a crunchy position.

February 10, 1916

I HAVE an idea that this will be my last letter from France. The Colonel told me last night that he did not think there would be any convoy to-day, but that there would be to-morrow, and the convoys usually leave here early in the morning so as to catch the boat that leaves Boulogne or Calais about 11.30.

So, if that is so, and all goes well, I shall be in London by the afternoon of my birthday.

Last night, just as I was settling down to sleep, the mail came, and two letters from you dated Saturday and Monday.

I am writing with the most abominable pen I ever suffered from, like a bent pin, and it is almost impossible to make it write at all.

Yesterday afternoon I had a long visit from Colonel Butler, one of my former brother officers of No. 15 Field Ambulance; he has for a long time now been commandant of a hospital at Boulogne. He had plenty to tell me of our old lot: and he declared that I look much better now than when I was up at the front. *I* don't think so.

Friday, February 11, 1916

I EXPECT you will be getting very impatient — it is so many days since I told you I should be going over with the next convoy: and still I am here.

I *really* thought I should be going to-day, for yesterday they brought my luggage into the ward, where no luggage is allowed till patients are leaving. When the night-Sisters came on duty last night, I said good-bye to the day-Sisters, not expecting to see them again. But they are all back again and I am still here.

It is a beastly day, so in that way I do not lose much by not having to travel — a dismal persistent rain, and very bleak and cold, too. So bed is not a bad place to be in, after all. It is three weeks to-day since I came into hospital and I certainly had expected to be in England long before this. However, one must be patient and I *must* be off soon now, as it is more than a week since there was a convoy.

This is my fifty-eighth birthday and the second I have spent in France: not that it feels like France here, for one never sees a French person or hears a word of French.

I have read about twenty books since I was in here, and am now reading again "Feats on the Fiords" by Harriet Martineau, which you read aloud to me about (almost exactly) fifty years ago. It is worth a hundred of the books written now.

Mrs. Arnoldi's Hospital for Officers, London
Sunday, February 13, 1916

I ARRIVED here just now (and it is jolly comfortable).

We left the Liverpool Merchants' about ten-thirty yesterday morning: and I was carried on a stretcher (fearful humbug) to the motor, thence in an ambulance motor to the train: I was carried into the train, after which I flatly refused to be carried any more and walked on board at Calais.

We reached Calais at three, but did not sail till 6.30 this morning, and got to Dover at 8.30 after a hateful crossing — I wasn't sick, but very nearly.

I *hope* to be given sick leave in a very few days; possibly on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Monday

THERE is no chance of my getting a board or getting home for a few days.

This morning I was examined by the house doctor

(Dr. Menzies) and the consulting surgeon (Dr. Swinford Edwards), and they immediately decided that a very trifling further operation was necessary, and I went straight up to the operating theatre and it was done, without any anaesthetic. The surgeon shook me warmly by the hand and said, "You *are* plucky, splendidly plucky."

I am *quite* all right, and able to eat a most excellent luncheon and dinner: and this afternoon I had two very pleasant visits — Cardinal Bourne for an hour and a half, and Lady O'Conor for two hours; but was not in the least tired.

The Cardinal was ever so nice, so simple and friendly and kind.

But of course I shall have to stop in bed a day or two.

This operation is a mere nothing. It hurt a little but not much.

Both the Cardinal and Lady O'Conor thought me looking *very well!*

Tuesday, February 15, 1916

I RECEIVED your letter of yesterday afternoon this morning.

I fear you won't get *mine* of yesterday afternoon till *this* afternoon: for London post goes out at five o'clock, and if you miss that, country letters don't get delivered till afternoon post of next day.

I couldn't catch the five o'clock general mail, because Cardinal Bourne came the moment I had finished luncheon, and stayed till nearly four, when Lady O'Conor came, who stayed till after six. The Cardinal was so nice, cordial, kind and simple.

Both he and Lady O'Conor said I looked *so well*, in spite of having had another little operation in the morning.

This afternoon Lady Portsmouth is coming, she has just telephoned to say so.

It *is* comfortable here, and I have a large room all to myself.

Here's luncheon!

I have written seven longish letters and am tired! I hope to get my board about Friday and then will come home: but meanwhile I'm in bed. I wonder why you only got my wire on *Monday;* it was sent off from Dover about 8.30 A.M. on *Sunday.*

While I am writing a man is photographing me (in bed), despatched by the Press Photographic Agency. Isn't it funny? He is to send you down a copy to-night. He is a queer little hunchback, with a clever, witty face, and he says, "That War Office! it won't take me, and all my friends are at the front."

I told him he'd much better stay at home, for he looks terribly sickly and delicate, but he said, "Better chaps than me have to take their chance; why shouldn't I take mine?"

The *Daily Graphic* telephones that it wants to interview me! So as soon as I've got rid of the Press Agency man I shall have them on my hands.

I'm doing very well and am very comfortable, but still in bed; the wound of the new operation is not quite healed, and I shan't be allowed up till it is, I expect.

Yesterday Lady Portsmouth came and spent a couple of hours, and had tea here. She was very nice and we had great talks. She brought me beautiful flowers from Hurstbourne. My room is *full* of flowers sent or brought by different people — camellias, snowdrops, violets, azaleas, daffodils.

Lady O'Conor telephones asking for leave to come again this afternoon.

I got your letter written yesterday afternoon this morning.

Wednesday

I HEAR that the doctors do not wish me to leave here before Monday. They are very cautious, and like to keep any case under observation till they are *sure* it is all right.

As I am getting the best doctors in England for nothing I think it much better to take advantage of it. Dr. Donald Hood, the King's Physician, is to see me before I go. It is odd that staying in bed four weeks has not weakened me at all, but only rested me. That no doubt is partly due to the fact that they have fed me up like a little pig ever since I came in hospital.

I am so glad Cyril Gater has been promoted. Please congratulate them for me.

Thursday, February 17, 1916

YESTERDAY I wrote to you twice, so I have all the less to say to-day.

I had a visit from a representative of the *Daily Graphic*, then a short one from the Marchioness of Ormonde; then I was overhauled by the King's Physician, Dr. Donald Hood; finally Mrs. Arnoldi (who runs this hospital) came and talked.

There are very many and excellent nurses here, and the hospital is *most* comfortable, the food first rate and the drink too (the latter all comes from the King).

I'm very comfortable here, and as long as doctoring, etc., is needed I may as well get it for nothing.

Friday, February 18, 1916

AFTER luncheon yesterday Lady O'Conor came and stayed a long time. She is a staunch and devoted old friend, and we talked over dozens of other old friends. Her sister is in terrible trouble; Wilfrid Ward, her hus-

band, and Herbert's father, has had a bad operation, and they now say he has consumption of the tissues and must die, perhaps in a few weeks.

I had a very cheery letter from the Bishop (Clifton) to-day; he says that the chaplain at Tidworth bolted to Ireland last week without saying "nothing to nobody," and the sacristan wrote to the Bishop that the enormous congregation there had no Mass or anything on Sunday.

I received enclosed last night; I don't remember the female at all, and am not attracted by her letter. I wish so many people would not want to come and see me. I think of telephoning to this one that I can only give her half an hour, and perhaps she won't care to come for that.

The Medical Board is coming to *sit on me* here, on Monday at 2.30. I am not decided yet whether I shall go down that evening or wait till a morning train on Tuesday.

The only train I could catch on Monday, after the board, would be the 5.50 from Waterloo, and that would reach Salisbury after eight, so I could not reach *you* till nearly nine.

However, I will think it over and let you know in good time.

Saturday, February 19, 1916

Besides myself there are five other officers to be "boarded" on Monday afternoon, so the board will probably take some time, and I think I had better give up the idea of getting off on Monday, and make up my mind to go down by daylight on Tuesday. Lady O'Conor telephones that she wants to come again to see me this afternoon; she is very good and sends me quantities of books, flowers, etc.

Yesterday I had a long visit from a priest I had not met for thirty years — Father Coventry. He saw my portrait in the newspaper and came to look me up.

He had much to tell me of my fame, etc., and how *many* people were forever talking to him about my writings!

I haven't been allowed up yet, but I just told the doctor that I *intended* to go out and say Mass to-morrow morning, and he said "all right." I shall go to the "Servites," a priory in Fulham Road ten minutes from here, where Father Coventry belongs; I shall not walk, but go in a taxi.

I have been very lucky in both my hospitals, the nursing and doctoring being *first-rate* in both: Littler-Jones operated me so well at Etaples that Dr. Swinford Edwards here (who is *the* specialist surgeon for my disease) said after examining me that he could not even feel the scar of the fissure.

Of course it's a great advantage to have the very best surgeons and physicians in England for nothing at all.

To-day began sunny, but has turned very dark and lowering; in five minutes it will pelt.

Sunday, February 20, 1916

I AM writing this at a table, the first letter I have written out of bed for just a month.

I got up at 7.15 this morning, dressed, and went in a taxi to the Servite Priory in Fulham Road, and said Mass there. The monks gave me breakfast, and then I *walked* home. It is no distance, only about ten minutes walking slowly, but I found it quite enough.

It is now nearly twelve, and at twelve I am going for a short motor-drive with Captain Neale, one of the other officer-patients here. He and I came together from Etaples. Then I shall have luncheon and go back to bed for the remainder of the day.

I shall go home on Tuesday; unless you hear to the contrary, by the train reaching Salisbury at five, which should bring me home a little before six. Yesterday I had three visitors.

First Lady O'Conor, who was very nice, as she always is; but her accounts of poor Wilfrid Ward, her brother-in-law, Herbert's father, very bad. I fear he cannot last long.

Then Miss Fanny Charlton, who looked amazingly well and *young;* she was in very good form, and fired off a series of anecdotes. . . .

I have been out for the motor-drive, and am delighted to get in again. It was an open car and there was a shrewd east wind. We drove round the park, which was full of people showing themselves after church.

I must stop now and go back to my bed and my hot bottle!

Monday Afternoon

JUST a line to tell you that the board has passed me fit, after a month's leave, for HOME SERVICE *permanently unfit* for Foreign Service.

I could have had six months' leave if I had wanted it, but I said, "No, one month."

Here's the Editor of the *Weekly Dispatch.*

THE END

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